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Tauhid and Tasawwuf: Indonesian Sufism in search of unity

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Tauhid and Tasawwuf
Indonesian Sufism in Search of Unity

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Abstract

Tauhid and Tasawwuf. Indonesian Sufism in Search of Unity.

The Islamic principle of *Tauhid* (Divine Unity) is foundational to Islam and *Tasawwuf*, better known to us as Sufism. Within the Indonesian consciousness of Islam, *Tauhid* can also mirror Indonesia's national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), its understanding of tolerance reverberating with the purity of Islam. The recent renewal of Sufism in Indonesia may provide a Sufi paradigm shift to help relieve some tension surrounding an emergent Islamist intolerance, thereby smoothing the rising waters of uncertainty flowing alongside the current Islamic resurgence.

While it is generally rare for Australians to take an interest in Indonesia's mystical Islamic culture, in contrasting the empty heart of Australian spirituality to the fullness of the Sufi spirit in Indonesia, we may discover therein some ways of bridging the gulf of ignorance and cultural superstition surrounding our island or self determined isolation. Surely it would be in our long term interest to uncover the inspiration and intent behind the particular form of Islamic expression in Indonesia that is *Tasawwuf*, and how it may lead to *Tauhid* or Unity.

Once I walked in the field of faith and by virtue of God's
mercy and grace I could see my own doings.
After I had walked in the field of faith I proceeded to the field of *tawhid*.
Then I did not see my own doings but I beheld only the being of Allah.
After I had walked in the field of *tawhid* I proceeded
to the field of (mystical) knowledge.
My own being had vanished, neither did I see the Lord.
This means that because my vision had become concentrated,
my own sight had vanished into the one and only sight,
and what was seen was He who is the eternal subject and object of His own sight.¹

Admonitions of Seh Bari, 74 - 16th century Javanese Muslim text, attributed to Sunan Bonang

¹ Drewes, 1969, pp.95-97

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;**
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or**
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.**

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I am also deeply grateful to the Indonesian people for the inspiration found in their cultural heritage. I wish them success in their holy democratic endeavour in 2004. My overriding gratitude, however, flows toward the One who oversees the many, and in Whom our Common Unity immerses us, as One.

Contents

Title	1
Abstract	2
Declaration	3
Acknowledgements	4
Contents	5
Introduction.	6
1. <i>Tasawwuf</i> and <i>Tauhid</i> in Indonesia. A question of Unity!	8
Introducing Indonesia's Unity within diversity.	8
<i>Tasawwuf</i> and the Islamic principle of <i>Tauhid</i> .	9
<i>Tasawwuf</i> and <i>Tauhid</i> in Indonesian Sufism.	13
2. <i>Tasawwuf</i> in Indonesian history.	16
The unfolding Sufi story.	16
<i>Tauhid</i> in Sufi texts. Hamzah Fansuri.	18
<i>Gift addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet</i> .	21
<i>Walisongo</i> . The Nine Saints of Java.	22
<i>The Admonitions of Seh Bari</i> .	22
<i>The Diary of a Javanese Muslim</i> .	24
3. Popular Sufism and the <i>Tauhid</i> of Common Unity.	26
<i>Baraka</i> and Pilgrimage.	26
<i>Pesantren</i> Sufi learning.	27
The Sufi orders or <i>Tarekat</i> .	30
Modern Sufi healing.	33
Awakening Modern Practical Sufism.	35
4. Political <i>Tauhid</i> for <i>Pancasila</i>, Tolerance and Unity	38
Neo-Sufism, reform and Islam.	38
<i>Nadlatul Ulama</i> . Organizing Sufism.	40
<i>Pancasila</i> , diversity and political tolerance.	41
Neo-Modernist Sufi leaders. <i>Gus Dur</i> and <i>Cak Nur</i> .	43
Indonesia. A model Unity?	45
5. Sufism and the Future. Confirming <i>Tauhid</i> for Spiritual Unity.	47
Spiritual Unity for regional stability.	47
Mediating reality.	50
The yearning for spiritual relevance.	54
Educating spirituality. The Sufi agenda.	57
Going the Sufi way: Spiritualizing our future.	58
Glossary	68
Appendix I. Map of Modern Indonesia	70
Facts on Modern Indonesia.	70
Appendix II. Historical Maps	71
The spread of Islam in the Archipelago.	71
Indonesian Archipelago in the 15 th Century.	72
Java in the 15 th Century.	72

Introduction.

The Sufis often speak of their spiritual Way (*Tasawwuf*) as a journey from the outer world into the inner dimension of reality, where they can prepare to meet the Reality they describe as the Unity (*Tauhid*) of God. This thesis will follow the journey along the Indonesian Sufi path as it weaves its way through popular traditions, political labyrinths and modern expressions. The Sufi journey, which is ongoing and will doubtless continue long into the future, has historically made its way among the many thousand islands of Nusantara, from safe harbours to coastal trading ports, always spreading its mission in the most effective way it could find. Having long been associated with trade, the Sufis may now be finding fresh impetus from the modern economic rationale of global cosmopolitanism. Sufism in Indonesia may well be the rising hope of Islam at its most peaceful and in its purest wisdom. Sufism is considered an old tradition and, until recently, was assumed by many scholars to be waning. Renewed interest, however, is exponentially growing all over the world, in every continent. While this may be interpreted as reaction to widespread social change, my own view tends towards the ideal espoused by the Sufis themselves, of a matrix for humanity to fulfill its evolutionary potential.

Most research on Indonesian Sufism has been undertaken from anthropological, sociological, historical, or literary perspectives, in the context of Southeast Asian studies. Notable researchers have included Anthony Johns, Martin Van Bruinessen, Ann Kumar, Greg Barton, Julia Day Howell, Christine Dobbin, Mark Woodward, to name but a few. In contrast to their specific approaches, I propose to focus on the spiritual consciousness of *Tasawwuf* in its relationship to *Tauhid* as it plays out in Indonesia, comparing this with the common bias against Islam that has been witnessed in Australia since 'September 11.' While aiming for a broad overview, I hope to offer a spiritually unitive approach. I intend to show the potential of Indonesian Sufism to culturally counter Australian fears of Islam with some perceptions of Islamic Unity as a more tolerant, ethical and intellectually challenging form of spirituality that is globally relevant. These aspects remain often unrecognized outside the Islamic sphere, while to some extent, the very nature of the esoteric dimension of Sufism makes it significantly more difficult to expose the deeper intent at work. My goal is to reach for some conclusions on how Sufi influence within Indonesia may help in bridging the gulf of troubled waters at present dividing Australians and Indonesians from sharing more common spiritual foundations for cross cultural discourse.

Much of my research has been Internet-based, although informed by previous life-experience in urban Jakarta during 1975 and, while my working knowledge of *Bahasa* Indonesian remains limited, my situation at the time allowed a perception of Indonesian life from the inside, where I struggled with my own personal *jihad* in accommodating to such a different culture. Nevertheless I enjoyed the colourful spirit of the people, their open warmth and the naive gentility as I sensed a community pulsating with a mystical love of God in each other. The chanting of children learning their *Qur'an* in Arabic was a daily reminder that this people breathed their prayer as

naturally as the wind rustling the leaves. I was struck by the divergence of spirit from what I had known in Australia. It held me captivated for some time, but then, I had not heard of Sufism, the esoteric heart of Islam. While Indonesia is now changing, in keeping with much of the modern world, its spiritual heart is still vibrantly alive.

This thesis will consider the Sufi spirituality of Indonesian Islam in the context of a common Australian denial of Indonesia's spiritual relevance to our own sphere of activity. This becomes expressed in a fear of Islamic cultural values deemed to be at odds with those of Australia. Nevertheless, spiritual values being so integral to Asian communities, they have now become significantly important to the security of Australians, particularly post 'September 11' and 'Bali'. While Islamist terrorism is the extreme end of a particularly nasty minority, it nevertheless remains actively dangerous as a focus of zealous fanatics in our region. Therefore an awareness of wiser, more traditional Islamic values will help to balance outlooks, both here and Indonesia, and may contribute to forging new links with future mutual benefits. If we are not to totally misunderstand our Indonesian neighbours, and in turn, be misunderstood by them, we could well take a closer look at the deeper side of their religion, as expressed in *Tasawwuf*.

This thesis follows the many ways Muslim Indonesians have sought to express the concepts of *Tauhid* and *Tasawwuf*. Chapter 1 introduces and defines these concepts in the context of Indonesia. Chapter 2 considers how Sufi history illustrates something of Indonesia's spiritual landscape by showing how cultural change has accommodated original traditions with their mystical overtones enabling early Sufi apostles to introduce Islamic moral precepts into the Javanese mind set through cultural variants. This also includes a brief examination of some historic Indonesian Sufi texts. Chapter 3 moves on to the wider field of popular devotion and Sufi expressionism. Chapter 4 will investigate how Sufi ideas have influenced Indonesian politics in its struggle to forge a nation in the wake of long colonial domination. This includes an overview of the largest Muslim organization, exposing some Sufic interests that have contributed towards the values of two highly respected Muslim leaders, Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid. Here we shall see how Indonesia's Sufi influence is emerging once again within the international Islamic agenda, hopefully merging towards a peaceful and more accommodative style of Islam on the international front. Chapter 5 will consider some of the pertinent questions relating to regional spiritual consciousness, to review how the Sufi response might feed into the wider question of where our spirituality may likely be heading, in its relation to our future regional interests and security. The question of an Australian bias against Islam points to the general deficit of any complimentary sense of religious education in our Government school curricula and how this feeds into attitudes of cultural intolerance and prejudice within our society. Finally we look at *Tauhid* as confirmation of the universal principle of Islam that, in Indonesia, can and has often been used to unite its many disparate faces of humanity into, at least in principle, one homogenized and, in some mystical sense, holy community.

1. *Tasawwuf* and *Tauhid* in Indonesia. A question of Unity!

Introducing Indonesia's Unity within diversity.

Indonesia holds a unique position in the contemporary Islamic world. While retaining its position as a secular state for over fifty years, Indonesia has become the world's most populated Islamic nation, with 88% of its 220 million people claiming allegiance to *Sunni* Islam. There is, however, something quite remarkable about the Islam of this sprawling archipelago of many thousand islands in the seas of Southeast Asia, this being the extent to which it has been influenced by the mystical traditions of the Sufis. While the vast majority of Indonesians proudly proclaim their Islamic status, the esoteric practice of *Tasawwuf* is still very much alive and flourishing in modern Indonesia, Sufism having been strongly represented throughout the known history of Indonesian Islam.²

The rise of Sufism was a great accommodation of Islam to the religious needs and consciousness of the masses. It was a great compromise formation, one that allowed Islam to spread halfway around the globe and to penetrate social strata to which the original austere faith had never appealed.³

Spiritually Indonesia embraces a range of religious customs. Since 1945 Indonesia has risen to become a deeply religious yet secular nation based upon broadly Islamic principles. Indonesia's national motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, Unity in Diversity, reflects its widely diverse ethnic population. This exotic new nation has a rich spiritual history derived from its myriad customs of Animism, Hindu-Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. The various Indonesian cultures have absorbed these multifarious influences while the Sufis in particular have adapted them creatively to their own needs. Nevertheless a dynamic sense of unity overarching all this diversity derives from the mystical heart of this people. The Sufis have accommodated many of these customs, subtly incorporating them into their framework of Islam. Indonesian Sufism is grounded in Islam on a "devotion to mystic unity"⁴ which Trimingham defines as the "organized cultivation of religious experience aimed at direct perception of the Real."⁵

The concept of society in Islam is based on Divine Law; which finds the foundation of world order in the principle and theory of *tawhid* (unity and oneness of God). The methodological principles of *tawhid* can be summarized briefly as the rejection of all that does not correspond with reality, denial of ultimate contradictions, and openness to new and/or contrary evidence.⁶

The Sufi way, devoted to a close relationship with the *Qur'anic* principle of *Tauhid* (Unity), has long harmonized with an Indonesian spirituality in love with its world. As Indonesia becomes progressively more Islamic, the real hope for retaining this unitive perspective could ideally be seen to reside in Sufism and its capacity to permeate and absorb those harsher elements of legalist Islam seeking to strengthen their influence by any means possible.

² Van Bruinessen, 1998, p.204

³ Bellah, 1970, p.156.

⁴ Sievers, 1974, p.10.

⁵ Trimingham, 1971, p.137.

⁶ Mowlana, 1996, p.128

Indonesia is the least understood Muslim state. While its population of over 200 million is almost 90% Islamic on paper, less than 20% would qualify as good Muslims by Saudi standards. No other country offers so wide a variety of Islamic practices as does Indonesia, where Hinduism and Buddhism prevailed far longer than Islam has yet done. Folk beliefs still haunt the mosques and Muslim schools, and 'pure' Muslims struggle, with only marginal success, to persuade the others that the local, Sufi-influenced forms of Islam are all wrong.⁷

Indonesia is often referred to by its people as *Nusantara*, meaning 'the Archipelago'⁸ where a restless mass of gentle souls holds a dynamic ignored by much of Australia, by most scholars of Islam and by much of the Islamic world. We have an opportunity before us, by nature of our regional proximity, to establish a peaceful and secure alignment with our nearest Islamic neighbours, supportively and cooperatively. In these days of current uncertainty about the future movement of the growing Islamic resurgence, we could now start forging the necessary links to move towards a clearer understanding of Islam, and Sufi Islam should prove the perfect bridge over the gulf of fear and ignorance pervading present Western misperceptions of Islam. In this respect, a new education towards tolerance and understanding might profitably be set in motion. Indonesia is a nation awaiting its true destiny in the Islamic sense and yet, only lately, is this starting to be recognized.

The role of Islam in contemporary Indonesia, and of Indonesia in contemporary Islam, has still to be not only assessed but noticed. Even an elementary acquaintance makes it clear that here is Islamically something distinctive and fascinating and potentially very rich.⁹

Tasawwuf and the Islamic principle of Tauhid

During the Umayyid period when worldly power dominated the Muslim world, there was a move to regain the deeper spiritual dimensions of Islam, and organized Sufism was developed from this time. The Islamic historian Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) notes in *al-Muqaddima* that the origins of *Tasawwuf* stem from the second Islamic century when those devoted to worship came to be called *Sufiyya* or 'People of *Tasawwuf*'.¹⁰

This knowledge [*Tasawwuf*] is a branch of the sciences of Sacred Law that originated within the *Umma*. From the first, the way of such people had also been considered the path of truth and guidance by the early Muslim community and the Companions of the Prophet, those who were taught by them, and those who came after them. It basically consists of dedication to worship, total dedication to Allah, disregard for the finery and ornament of the world, abstinence from the pleasure, wealth, and prestige sought by most men, and retiring from others to worship alone.¹¹

Buillet, also, reminds us how the Companions were revered as repositories of his spiritual knowledge, telling stories which provided crucial answers to questions, and thus becoming particularly important for non-Arab converts who did not share the language, culture and background of the earliest Muslims.¹²

⁷ Peters, 2002, p.18

⁸ Sievers, 1974, pp.14, 11

⁹ Smith, 1957, p.295

¹⁰ Keller, 2002, www.

¹¹ Ibn Khaldun, cited in Keller, 1995, www.

¹² Buillet, 1994, p.35

The first step of a Sufi is to teach a traveler on the path (*tarekat*) to release his desires (*nafs*), with an aim to emerge from his individual self-consciousness and ultimately gain, by effort and by Divine grace, experiential knowledge of God. Seyyid Hossein Nasr describes this as a process wherein Muslims seeking absolute Truth (*Haqq*) in the *tarekat* never cease to revere and practice the *Shari'ah*.¹³ The Sufi Way is based on the metaphysical notions of *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being). Islam defines man as the vice-regent of God, but Sufism goes further into the doctrine of Universal or Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kamil*) aiming for the perfection of humanity in the service of God. Although Nasr writes, "Sufism can best be defined as Divine Wisdom,"¹⁴ we must also remember that Wisdom, particularly in our global society, has many faces while Sufism knows, in its heart, that there is only the One.

As for the origin of the word *Tasawwuf*, it may well be from Sufi, the person who does *Tasawwuf*, which seems to be etymologically prior to it, for the earliest mention of either term was by Hasan al-Basri who died 110 years after the Hijra, reported to have said, "I saw a Sufi circumambulating the *Kaaba*, and offered him a *dirham*, but he would not accept it."¹⁵

The Muslim mystic, through following the Path of Sufism, begins with the basic premise of Islam, the *Tawhid* (Unity) and the *Shar'* (revealed Law) seeking to penetrate their inner significance, believing that *Tawhid/Shar'*, experienced as one Reality, is the world's foundation and its subsistence.¹⁶ Even so, there are various interpretations of such fundamental concepts. Reformers like Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) expounded the virtue of *tawhid* in relation to its opposite, *shirk* (idolatry). While the purity behind *tawhid* must always be respected, it is regrettable that Mawdudi's ideas are used to support politically radical ideologies which seek to deny the pluralism that is complimentary to the One.

If the real meanings of *Tawhid* are fully grasped, we avoid every form of disbelief, atheism and polytheism. This is the natural consequence of belief in the Unity of God. *Tawhid* is the highest conception of godhead, the knowledge of which God has sent mankind in all ages through His Prophets. It is Knowledge, pure and absolute, without the least shade of ignorance. Man became guilty of *shirk*, idol-worship and *kufir* only because he turned away from the teachings of the Prophets and depended on his own faulty reasoning, false perceptions or biased interpretations. *Tawhid* dispels all the clouds of ignorance and illuminates the horizon with the light of reality.¹⁷

There are those who hold firmly to a puritanical view of *tawhid*, having appropriated it for their own divisive purposes, sometimes to incite violence on religio-political grounds. Well might we ask what drives the denial of *Tasawwuf* in such minds. Islamist extremism has bred not only an impassioned hatred of Western values, but also of Sufism, which it perceives as heretical to Islam, interpreting it as a cultic manifestation of hero worship and a threat to the purity of *Tauhid*. But, as Nasr reminds us, "One cannot understand the structure of Islamic society without considering fully the Sufis along with the '*ulama*.'" ¹⁸

¹³ Nasr, 2002b, p.118

¹⁴ Nasr, 1985, p.131

¹⁵ Keller, 1995, www.

¹⁶ Trimingham, 1971, pp.141-142.

¹⁷ Mawdudi, (n.d.), *Tawhid*, www.

¹⁸ Nasr, 2002b, p.178

Tauhid (Divine Unity) is the Truth of existence, originating in the One God, beside which there is no other. The purity of Islam recognizes this reality which unifies its world view, thus it can be seen to transcend the common divide into religious and secular life. William Chittick describes *Tawhid*, as "the assertion of the unity of God. [*Tawhid*] means that all of reality is unified in its principle."¹⁹

[E]verything in the universe comes from God and returns to God. Moreover, *Tawhid* is always in effect, ... everything in the universe is utterly and absolutely dependent upon God here and now, always and forever. *Tawhid* is to declare unity by asserting the truth of the One, who is the Absolute Reality ... *Tawhid* is a way of seeing things that establishes correlation, balance, harmony, and coherence.²⁰

In Farid'uddin Attar's *Conference of the Birds* we discover thirty birds who travel through the seven valleys of spiritual experience on their way to see the *Simurgh*, their mystic King, which they finally realize to be the Divine reflection of the Thirty Birds, themselves.²¹ (*Si* = thirty, *murgh* = bird). Unity and plurality can thus be seen as necessary correlatives to each other.

In the fifth valley, Unity, everything is broken into pieces; everything has lost its temporal and conventional meaning. Ultimately one finds that the evolution of the universe and growth have come from the same source; that is, plurality has spring from unity. Although the individual may see many forms, they are all one, just as oneness appears in number.²²

The first of the five basic pillars of Islam, the *Shahada* declares that 'There is no god other than the One God,' containing within itself the image of *Tauhid*, the basis of all action in Islam. The Sufis understand Divine Unity (*Tauhid*) not merely as there being "no god but God" but that there is nothing but God. The world of Phenomenon and of the Senses is a mere Mirage - a reflection of Being on Not-Being, manifesting the attributes of Being as the reflection manifests its original, but not really participating in its nature.²³ Thus it can be seen that *Tawhid* implies the unity, coherence, and harmony among all parts of the universe, standing for the necessity of exclusive servitude to God.²⁴ The Sufi way follows distinctive patterns of spiritual discipline to develop the purity and surrender of the mystical awareness into the Unity (or *Tauhid*) of God, on which the Sufi ceaselessly focuses. *Tasawwuf*, however, has a very important role in mediating Islamic fervour as it is founded on the sincerity of the individual human spirit in its response to the *tauhid* that underwrites reality.

Tasawwuf (Sufism) is the Islamic science of '*ikhlas*,' or sincerity. Sufis emphasize personal spiritual experience while still holding strongly to the *Shari'ah*.²⁵

Indeed, Sufism can be seen as the opening into the spiritual heart of Islam. In revealing the mystical center of Islam, *Tasawwuf* can give insight into the true nature of this religion thus helping to dispel some of the many false stereotypes currently circumambulating the world. When witnessed through the vision of the heart, the world reflects the essence of the

¹⁹ Chittick, 2001, www.

²⁰ Chittick, 2001, www.

²¹ Attar, 1971, p.132

²² Aresteh, 1980, p.34

²³ Shushtery, 1980, p.186.

²⁴ Mowlana, 1996, pp.119-121

²⁵ Rice, 1999, May 13, www.

fundamental truth which is God, or *Allah*. It is little wonder then that to rediscover the foundational unity of existence we must bypass the intellectual faculty and focus beyond our everyday knowledge. The Sufis focus their prayer and insight on the spiritual heart. As a form of mystical consciousness, *Tasawwuf* draws the devotee deep into the purity of a Universal devotion to God, through practices covering meditation, contemplation and invocation (*dzikr*). Importance is laid on developing individual spiritual virtues for their collective significance.

By function of His outwardness He creates a world of separation and otherness and through His inwardness He brings men back to their Origin. Religion is the means whereby this journey is made possible, and it recapitulates in its structure the creation itself which issues from God and returns unto Him. Religion consists of a dimension which is outward and another which, upon the basis of this outwardness, leads to the inward. These dimensions of Islamic revelation are called the *Shariah* (the Sacred Law), the *Tariqah* (the Path) and the *Haqiqah* (the Truth).²⁶

Within Islam the manifestation of the *batin* (inner) and the *zahir* (outer) are two complimentary sides of the expression of God's creativity and therefore the Sufi way should sit comfortably alongside the *Shari'a* as a necessary part of the balance that is required for the perfection of Unity (*Tawhid*). It is important to remember, as Bellah reminds us, that Reality is always a relationship between 'out there' and 'in here.'²⁷ In examining the *batin* and *zahir* natures of Islamic spirituality, the unity or *tauhid* which dwells within and between all opposites, will be observed as the true reality transcending apparent divisions while showing that both expressions of Islam are a necessary correlative to the perfecting of humanity. Within Islam the way of *Tasawwuf* encompasses and is protected by the binding ideals of the *Shari'a* law, in its unadulterated form a divine legislation informing and reminding its followers of their ultimate purpose in the service of the One God in whom we all take part.

Tasawwuf in respect to Islam is a *Shari'a* science necessary to fully realize the Sacred Law in one's life, to attain the states of the heart demanded by the *Koran* and *hadith*. This close connection between *Shari'a* and *Tasawwuf* is expressed by the statement of Imam Malik, founder of the Maliki school, that 'he who practices *Tasawwuf* without learning Sacred Law corrupts his faith, while he who learns Sacred Law without practicing *Tasawwuf* corrupts himself. Only he who combines the two proves true.'²⁸

The Sufis advocate the continuing remembrance of the Divinity, practicing this regularly in a form of worship they name *dzikr*. This is often invoked in the form of the *Shahada*, the Islamic confession of faith, always affirming and reconciling the Muslim to God. "The *Shahada*, that there is no-one except the One God, is as pivotal to Sufism as is the *Shari'ah*."²⁹ The duality inherent in the *Shahada*, *La ilaha - illa Allah*, the first half negating 'all other than God' and the second half 'affirming all that is God', mirrors the human intellect with its two-eyed view of reality relaying both perceptions in reversing order as they cross over to the brain. It is simply this perception of reality which distances us from the Truth (*Haqiqat*). The *Shahada* is the declaration of the concept of *Tauhid* (Unity) as a confession of the inner relationship with the Divine. At times the *dzikr* is expressed purely the repetition of the holy name of *Al-lah*

²⁶ Nasr, 2002a, www.

²⁷ Bellah, 1970, p.254

²⁸ Keller, 1995, www.

repeated rhythmically and building up to a ritual ecstasy invoking Divine Unity, or *Tauhid*. *Tasawwuf* carries the deep potential to annihilate all the wrongs of humanity in One mystical experience of total immersion (*fana*) into the One. The mystery of this hidden secret is the living challenge ever calling within the heart of the Sufi.

Tasawwuf and Tauhid in Indonesian Sufism

The overall acceptance of the Islamic science of *Tasawwuf* sees *Ilmu* (esoteric knowledge) generally highly valued in Indonesia. Indeed, Trimingham notes that "the cultivation of *Tasawwuf* has been strongest in non-Arab lands."³⁰ Annemarie Schimmel sees Sufism as evident in the traditional behaviour of Muslims, based on the etiquette (*adab*) of the *hadith* and refined by the Sufis, where "well-defined rules were fundamental in the development of relations between people of different spheres and determined the social network in countries from Morocco to Indonesia for centuries. [T]he influence of Islamic mysticism extends from the highest metaphysical speculations to the world of the illiterate village women and it coloured large areas of Muslim society before the advent of modern civilization."³¹ The Sufis respected native traditions and customs and assured people that Islam's liberalism could encompass their individualism.³² One typical Sumatran response to being questioned on Sufism: "But it is the same thing, in Indonesia Sufism *is* Islam." This idea is reiterated throughout Indonesia, as Muhammad Zuhri, a respected modern Sufi master affirms.

For me *tasawwuf* (Sufism) is Islam itself in its higher dimension.³³

Although the word '*Sufi*' commonly alludes to the wearing of wool by the mystic, in the steaming climate of Indonesia this seems too strange an allusion. The natural propensity towards mystical awareness to Indonesian spirituality makes for an easy degree of attachment towards *Tasawwuf*.³⁴ Even the *salat* ritual prayer, foundational to Muslim piety, has been integrated into Sufi disciplines. Sheikh al-Bari, who may have been the teacher of the Saint of Bonang, urges Sufi aspirants to loyally observe the *salat*, and gives some of the spiritual meaning of this prayer for the mystic, including an admonition to apply oneself to the *salat* and to charitable works.³⁵

The Sufi *shaykh* was not respected because he was a *mujtahid*, but because he was a *muhaqqiq* and was looked upon as representing the Prophet in the three dimensions of *Shariah*, *tariqa*, and *haqiqa*. He was thought to see things as they truly are.³⁶

Many traditional Islamic schools or *pesantren* are headed by a *Kyai* or *Syeik* with Sufi affiliations. Such establishments would provide spiritual training for disciples seeking to learn the mystical path (*tarekat*) of *Tasawwuf*, towards experiencing personal unity into *Allah*.

²⁹ Lings, 1975, p. 63

³⁰ Trimingham, 1971, pp.121-122; pp.251-2

³¹ Schimmel, 1992, pp.119-120.

³² Zakaria, 1988, p.103.

³³ Zuhri, 1999, *Sufi Healing*. www.

³⁴ Djajadiningrat, 1958, www.

³⁵ Drewes, 1969, p.12, 17

³⁶ Chittick, 2002, www.

Traditionally the *Kyai* requires absolute obedience from his pupils as part of their preparation for spiritual purity, and he provides a living example of the right path to Islam. Former President Abdurrahman Wahid is one such *kyai* who explains 'How to Perform Dzikir?' on his own web site. He describes a second type as *dzikr fi'li* (*dzikir* by 'action') which he regards as any aspect of life reflecting the unlimited authority of God, which "suggests [to] us to always refer to activities that bring goodness to people" hence the doer is called "following God's command."³⁷

Therefore, as stipulated in the Holy Koran: "Raise question to those who perform *dzikir* whenever you can not understand a thing" (*fa as-aluu 'ala ahla al-dzikh in kuntum la ta'lamun*). The use of the word *dzikir* here refers to rationality that is based on knowledge. In other words, *dzikir* means one's patience in understanding the glory of God through knowledge. It follows that doing any activity brings goodness to others - with awareness of the greatness of God in mind - is another way, that of performing *dzikir*.³⁷

Classical Sufi teachers follow a time-honoured teaching method based on stories, questions and answers for those seeking information on the requirements of the Sufi path. The more erudite study philosophical and metaphysical texts, with schools of Sufism devoted to unraveling the deepest secrets of the *Qur'an*. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad, as the direct receiver of Qur'anic revelation, is acknowledged by Indonesians as the true revealer of Sufism. Al-Ghazali, whose Sufi wisdom is highly respected in Indonesia for its ethical tendencies, is generally considered to have reconciled *Tasawwuf* with orthodox Islam.³⁸

The Sufi *silsila* is a traditional chain of spiritual authority designating the authenticity of the *beraka* (spiritual power) flowing from the master. Indonesia's Sufis mostly trace their *silsila* (chain of authority) back to the 10th century Sufi Abu Qasim al-Junaid of Baghdad, who said, "There is none in my cloak other than God."³⁹ Thus the Sufi affirms the sole Unity of God and the utter denial of values that claim any competition with Divinity. Some of the earliest Sufis in Indonesia have attained the state of *wali*, or Muslim saint, and are highly regarded to this day for bringing Islam to the nation. As well as having contributed significantly towards the Islamic conversion of Indonesia, *Tasawwuf* has proved itself highly capable of syncretic objectives in showing enough flexibility to encompass the varied cultures and traditions.

The unity of the Islamic faith which its followers emphasize is well demonstrated in Indonesia, but so also is the social diversity which has done much to give the history of Islam and the history of Indonesia the dynamism which characterizes both.⁴⁰

The Islamic theory of *Tawhid* implies the unity, coherence and harmony among all parts of the Universe, being the most important pillar of the Islamic world and stipulates exclusive servitude to God. It also negates any right of sovereignty over human society by anyone except God.⁴¹ The stress on *ummah* (community) in Islam is one of the fundamental distinctions of Indonesian Sufism which may help to explain the huge allegiance towards Islam throughout the archipelago, although a harsh response by the Suharto Government towards curbing Communism in 1965 has

³⁷ Wahid, 2003, www.

³⁸ Djajadiningrat, 1958, www.

³⁹ Junaid cited in Al-Attas, 1970, p.453

⁴⁰ Riecklefs, 1991, p.4

also contributed to the ongoing Islamization of the nation.

The Sufis believe that all Creation is connected through Divine unity pervading the universe. This notion of 'Unity of Being' has long captured the imagination of mystics, whereby the Sufis aim to unveil that which separates one from another, from the divine One.

The world view of *Tawhid* (the unity of God, human beings, and universe) provides meaning, spirit and aim to life and commits the individual to an ethic of action. In short, it is the eternal principle of *tawhid* that regulates the Islamic Community Paradigm and does not allow itself to be subservient, in whole or in part, to any other paradigm.⁴²

Tauhid as the Divine unity of God with the many has surely been as accepted by Indonesia as by any other modern Islamic nation. With a proliferation of Islamic institutes, colleges and Universities, modern Indonesia is expressing this great spiritual truth by earnestly seeking to uncover the validity of this claim within the originality and syncretism of its Indonesian expression – and perhaps more than any other Islamic society. We may well find the Sufi Islam of Nusantara is slowly but surely leading the world across a spiritual bridge - over the sweeping tide of economic materialism that threatens to engulf so much spiritual treasure, leaving the dervish-hood of humanity floundering in its desperate search for some spiritual relevance in the modern world - towards a Unity incorporating the full spiritual diversity of a pluralizing humanity. This plurality is feeding the call to Unity and *Tasawwuf* itself is part of this mission.

In the process of this search it should become clear that the many thousand islands which make up modern Indonesia have long been a hybrid breeding ground for an exotic spiritual mysticism which has managed to survive the various trends of acculturation. There are welcoming signs that within the Indonesian Islamic world the Sufi way is active in the search to create ever more Unity. The Sufi process has proven itself to be effective in releasing a creative response towards the unitive design. In essence, therefore, Sufism is a religious spirit ripe for our time. The Sufi journey would also encourage a holistic link between past, present and future leading towards a more unitary outlook that balances the timelessness of the mystical experience of God with our own dividing experience of duality.

⁴¹ Mowlana, 1996, p.120

⁴² Mowlana, 1996, p.133.

2. *Tasawwuf* in Indonesian history.

The unfolding Sufi story.

Through the influence of Arab and Indian Muslim traders Sufi ideas have played a significant part in the relatively peaceable Islamic conversion of the Indonesian Archipelago. The very earliest Muslim gravestone in East Java dates from 1082. By 1282, the King of Samudra in Aceh was sending emissaries with Arabic names to China. In 1292, Muslims were noted by Marco Polo in Perlak on the coast of northern Sumatra.⁴³ In 1297, Pasai in Sumatra converts to Islam. Sultan Malek Saleh is the first Muslim ruler in what is now Indonesia. When Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta passed through Samudra on his way to China in 1345, he found that the ruler was a follower of the *Shafi'i* legal school.⁴⁴ Al-Attas describes the characteristics of the early propagators of Islam revealing traits peculiar to the Sufis, despite the dominant role of jurisprudence in the first phase of the Islamization process in Aceh, the first area to receive Islam long before the others. He ascribes the second phase of the conversion to Islam to the predominance of mysticism accounting for the Sufis as the disseminators of Islam.⁴⁵

In contrast to most Muslim countries, Islam was brought to Indonesia with peace through trading and spiritual healing in the hands of Muslim Sufis. The pluralistic and egalitarian nature of Islam is believed to have attracted the Indonesian masses to embrace Islam in the thirteenth century.⁴⁶

Cross-fertilization of cultures occurred as Sufi proselytizers accompanied Arab and Mughal traders from various Indian Ocean centres, with their interests in gold, tin, pepper and spices from at least the 14th century. Sir Richard Winstedt mentions that the *Sejarah Melayu*, one of the earliest indigenous historical texts, retains Ma'abri (Ma'abar of Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta), an Arab name for the Coramandel Coast, as the centre from which Islam spread to the East Indies.⁴⁷ Peacock draws a connection between early Sufic Islam in the archipelago providing a dynamic stimulus to trade as the traders experienced a new legitimacy and meaning in seeing themselves part of an international Muslim community or *ummah*.⁴⁸

The concept of the unity of God and the brotherhood of mankind - the two fundamental concepts within the theory of *tawhid* - gave sustenance to the knowledge and scientific inquiry of this period [development of Islam between 700-1300]. The concept of the unity of man knocked down the geographical barriers and racial and linguistic walls promoted earlier.⁴⁹

The presence of Sufism in Sumatra and Java can be gleaned from many early chronicles of the Malayu cultures. The *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* ('*Story of the kings of Pasai*') tells the story of a king in Samudra who had a prophetic dream in which he is instructed in Islam by the Prophet Muhammad. Subsequently an Arab ship arrives in Samudra after stopping in India to pick up a Sultan who had declined his throne to become a holy man. Thereafter, the ruler of Samudra is

⁴³ Roland, 2003, www.

⁴⁴ Djajadiningrat, 1958, www.

⁴⁵ Al-Attas, 1970, pp.200-210

⁴⁶ Mas'ud, 2002, www.

⁴⁷ Winstedt, in Hall, 1961, p.26

⁴⁸ Peacock, 1973, pp.31-33

⁴⁹ Mowlana, 1996, p.135

converted and the holy man stays to confirm the establishment of Islam. A similar tale occurs in the 1612 text of the *Sejarah Melayu* telling how Sayyid Abdul Aziz becomes the teacher of the king. The *Babad Tanah Jawi* ('*Histories of the land of Java*') consists of a number of texts ascribing the first Javanese conversions to the *Walisongo*, the nine famous saints of Islam.⁵⁰ Kacung Marijan notes that the role of merchants and traders in the dissemination of Islam through Indonesia was brief and attributes the most influential missionary role of Islam to the *Walisongo*. By working on the conversion of the ruling elite, the Sufis would likely attract a clamour for converts to the new religion associated with the status of the ruling classes, while owing to the caste system common to Hindu society, the lower classes would scramble to adopt the more equitable ideology of Islam.⁵¹

From the earliest Islamic intervention into Indonesia the Sufi missionary spirit indeed played a vital role in transmitting the new religious ideas to the people. This they accomplished quite remarkably by adjusting many local customs, such as the *Wayang* puppet dramas of the old Hindu *Majapahit* empire, to include newer illustrations of Islamic morals and values.

Among the *Wayang* episodes created by *Walisongo*, the most famous one is '*Serat Dewa Ruci*', which tells the story of *Arya Sena* (known as *Bhima*), one of the five Pandawa brothers in the *Mahabaratha* epic, who was looking for *Tirta Suci* (Holy Water). In this story, *Bhima* symbolizes a *salik* (Truth seeker), who traversed the path of Sufism to reach the *Ma'rifat* (Gnosis) and met his own *nafs* (lower self/desires) as the biggest obstacles. *Bhima* was ordered by his teacher, *Pandita Durna*, to look for the Holy Water in the ocean.⁵²

In stressing the Unity of humanity Sufi teachers undoubtedly struck a responsive chord with the mystical Indonesians for those same stories are played and replayed to delighted audiences throughout Java to this day, particularly in rural Java.

Anne Kumar comments that the level of the intellectual life of the period correlates with the prosperity of the particular state and its ability to maintain a two-way relationship with Muslim centres such as Mecca.⁵³ Schrieke is quite certain that Islam was introduced into the archipelago along the trade routes, but considers it impossible to understand the Islamization of the archipelago without taking into account the antagonism between Moslem and Portuguese traders, arriving in India in 1498, for the Portuguese were attacking Moslem merchant vessels by 1500. He thus interprets Portuguese expansion as a sequel to the Crusades.⁵⁴

Acch in North Sumatra was the earliest centre of the propagation of Islam and it was here the most notable early Sufi writers, Hamzah al-Fansuri and Shamsuddin Pasai as-Sumatrani appeared from the mid 16th century followed by Nuruddin al-Raniri and Abdul Ra'uf of Singkel during the 17th century. Shamsuddin is said to have learnt *Tasawwuf* from Muhammad Fadlullah al-Burhanpuri, the Gujerati author of *al-Tuhfah al-Mursala ila Ruh al-Nabi*. Nuruddin al-Raniri

⁵⁰ Ricklefs, 1993, pp.8-9

⁵¹ Marijan, 1998, www.

⁵² Roland, 1998, www.

⁵³ Kumar, 1979, p.5.

⁵⁴ Schrieke, 1966, Vol II, p.230 -234

was a Gujarati Sufi teacher who stayed in Aceh between 1637-1644, under the patronage of the Sultan. Al-Raniri belonged to the *Rifa'iyya tarekat*, claiming his authority from his Hadhramaut teacher Ahmad al-Qusyasi (1583-1661), a great Sufi mystic and scholar from Medina, who was affiliated with at least eleven mystical orders including the *Naqsybandiyya*, *Qadiriyya*, *Syattariyya*, and *Kubrawiyya*. His reputation attracted numerous students, playing an important role in spreading the teachings of the great Andalusian mystic Ibn al-'Arabi (1165-1240) to Sumatra and Java. One of Qusyasi's many students who made up the Djawa community was Abdul Ra'uf al-Singkel, the most revered *Syattariya* Sufi master in Aceh, who studied in Mecca and Medina for 20 years, returning in 1661 as a *faqih* and Sufi master.⁵⁵ Abd al-Samed al-Palembani, from South Sumatra, arrived in Yemen in 1791, soon becoming highly regarded as a learned friend of God, and subsequently greatly influenced interest in al-Ghazali in Indonesia.⁵⁶

***Tauhid* in Sufi texts. Hamzah Fansuri**

Many of the great works of *Tasawwuf* found their way to the Archipelago during the earliest Islamic years and were transcribed by various Sufi teachers. One of the most erudite of the early Sufi masters was Hamzah Fansuri. Although very little is known of his early life, his mystical writings present his poetic and esoteric view of the complexities of Sufi metaphysical teachings based on the philosophy of great Sufi masters, Ibn al-'Arabi and Abd al-Karim al-Jili. Hamzah was a Sufi poet and a wandering *Wujudiya* follower, who wrote and conveyed his teachings to anyone wanting to derive knowledge and wisdom from him. His pupil Syekh Syamsuddin As-Samatrani (d.1630) was a great *ulama* (religious scholar) who strongly influenced the Sultan of Aceh, Iskandar Muda and his court.⁵⁷

Hamzah Fansuri was initiated into the *Qadiriya* order in Mecca. Hamzah's complex and erudite mystical poetry was much maligned by the more orthodox Sufi, Nuruddin Al-Raniri, whose rivalry was so intense that he caused the books of both Hamzah and Shamsuddin to be burnt. Hamzah's writing on *wujudiya*, the concept of *Wahdat al-Wujud* or *Oneness of Being* as illustrated by Ibn al-Arabi was what Raniri found so contentious. One of the main criticisms imposed upon Sufism has centred upon the assumption that Sufis practice a form of Pantheism, by identifying the phenomenal world with God. Primarily this assumption has been based upon the belief that the 'Great Sheikh,' Ibn al-'Arabi, had evolved his metaphysical ideas from Neo-Platonic thought during the thirteenth century. Hamzah Fansuri's mystical writings, dating to around the second half of the 16th century, present a very detailed esoteric view of complex Sufi metaphysical teachings based on the *Wahdat al-Wujud* metaphysics of Ibn al-'Arabi's philosophies and Abd al-Karim al-Jili's concept of *al-Insan al-kamil*, or 'Perfect Man.'⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Tol & Witkam, 1995, www.

⁵⁶ Feener, 1999, www.

⁵⁷ Abdullah, 1987, p. 87

⁵⁸ Al-Attas, 1970, p.160.

The concept called *Wahdatu'l-Wajud* (Unity of Being), God is considered as the Ultimate Reality, which is transcendent (beyond shape and form) but in essence immanent in Creation ... the Sufis have usually regarded it desirable not to reveal their inner thoughts about *Tawhid* (and when they do reveal them, the style they use makes their language unintelligible to most people), whereas the Prophet was told to communicate his message clearly as part of his mission (*Qur'an* 5:67):

"Know therefore that the ultimate of all disciples of Mystic intuition is this *Tawhid*, and the secrets of this discipline and cannot be written in any book because, according to a saying of 'Arifin [those who have achieved awareness], exposing the secrets of Divinity amounts to infidelity. [al-Ghazali, *Ihya 'Ulumi'l-Din*, Vol. 4. p. 641]"⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Sufi mystics have proceeded to write their thoughts on the mystery of divine unity and its relationship with human life. Al Attas considers that Hamzah writes in Malay so that those not understanding Arabic can discourse on the subject, thus indicating that all previous books on the subject were written only in Arabic and Persian. Al-Attas expounds three of Hamzah's major works of which two will be considered here, *Asraru'l-'Arifin* (*The Secrets of the Gnostics*) and *Muntahi* (*The Adept*). Much of these works revolves around various aphorisms of the '*Ahlu'l Suluk* or *People of the Path*, the great Sufi authors with whom Hamzah was most familiar, quoting from Junayd, Ibn al-'Arabi, Jami, al-Hallaj, Attar and others. Hamzah demonstrates in his writings a total grasp of the ideas of these Sufis, mostly putting them into his own phraseology.⁶⁰ Al-Attas believes Hamzah's texts to be the best and most lucid texts on the subject and is astonished that this fact has not been given due attention.⁶¹

Of the three texts, Al-Attas claims that the *Asrar*, roughly modeled on Ibn al-'Arabi's *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, cannot be considered as introductory except as perhaps as an introduction towards interpreting Hamzah's unique forms of verse. The *Asrar* basically covers the concept of creation, and Hamzah contrasts the extremes of human nature in his aim to encounter the mystery of Gnosticism. On the one hand he quotes Junaid, 'Thy existence is a sin with which no other sin can be compared' and yet always balance by other Quranic verses of an equally Gnostic sense. 'Man is My secret and I am his Secret and his [true] Nature.'⁶² Hamzah's poetry shows quite a direct influence of Persian Sufism both in the beauty of its form and the depth of its mystical content. Al-Attas, presumes this connection to have come from Hamzah's early upbringing in the Persian dominated city of Shahr-i-Nor in Siam. According to Al-Attas, Hamzah's keywords are *wujud* (Being) which relates to ontology, *ada* (to be, also to have) relating to cosmology, and *diri* (the self) relating to psychology.⁶³ Hamzah's use of analogy beautifully expresses the infinite range of the human soul in its quest to plummet the depths of human existence while ever inviting the auditor to see the self, within the Self.

Our Lord is like a Fathomless Ocean
Whose waves are rolling in every direction,
Ocean and waves are both intimate,
At last to its depths the waves will sink.

⁵⁹ Iftikhar, 1997, www.

⁶⁰ Al-Attas, 1970, p.14.

⁶¹ Al-Attas, 1970,

⁶² Al-Attas, 1970, p.457, p.464.

⁶³ Al-Attas, 1970, pp.147-8.

The Ocean is the Knower its currents the Known,
 Its condition is *Qasim* its waves are *Maqsum*.
 Its tempest is 'governing', its dispositions are 'governed',
 Upon the entire Universe it is these that are featured.

If you really know [the meaning of] existence,
 It is where you effect true vision,
 Cast off your form from all restrictions,
 In order that you may abide in your Self.⁶⁴

Towards the end of the *Asrar* (62) *Fa'lam* - His union is constant in the Sea of the Subtle - Hamzah discusses Unity using the local analogy of a coconut to explain the integrity of the Law (like its husk), the Way (like its shell), the Truth (like its flesh) and Gnosis (like its oil). All are necessary to make the coconut complete, which, even if planted without its husk, will never grow and will be destroyed.

In such wise must the seeker after God Most Glorious and Exalted not be separated from the Law and the Way and the Truth and Gnosis so that he be perfect. If he is separated from the Law he goes astray.

When you are at one with the Law, you are at one with the Way; when you are at one with the Way, you are at one [with] the Truth; when you are at one [with] the Truth, you are at one with Gnosis. But God knows best!⁶⁵

This shows the depth and sincerity explicit in Hamzah's Indonesian understanding of "this book, *The Secrets of the Gnostics on an Exposition of the Science of the Path and of Divine Unity*, completed in good order. Amen!"⁶⁶

The sea is eternal: when it heaves
 It is called 'waves' - but in reality they are the sea -
 For sea and waves are one.⁶⁷

The *Muntahi* or *The Adept*, which Al-Attas considers a much later product, is an advanced work. Again Hamzah uses such metaphors as the waves and the sea, to explain the relationship of humanity to the Divine. Hamzah is careful to reiterate the careful warnings of the Sufi masters. "None has gnosis of God but God."⁶⁸ He quotes Syekh 'Attar,

Do not be at all - this alone is perfection.
 Do not be two-faced - this alone is union.

explaining that the meaning of 'union' excludes the notion of 'two' for when doubt and certainty have vanished, only then can he be 'united'.⁶⁹ For Al-Attas, the *Muntahi*, full of ideas of the mystery of the gnosis of God crammed into an impossible nutshell, was never meant to be divulged to profane ears, but meant only for adepts. He proposes this as a basis for Raniri's interpretation of heresy. However, it is more than likely that Hamzah's earlier polemical writing ridiculing the *Qadi* and the *Ulama*, including a warning of destruction to those who make companions of the rich, would doubtless provide reason enough to incur the enmity of Raniri

⁶⁴ Hamzah Fansuri in Al-Attas, 1970, p.357.

⁶⁵ Hamzah Fansuri in Al-Attas, 1970, pp.413-414.

⁶⁶ Al-Attas, 1970, p.415.

⁶⁷ Hamzah Fansuri in Al-Attas, 1970, p.449.

⁶⁸ Al-Attas, 1970, p.465.

⁶⁹ Al-Attas, 1970, p.471.

who was in the service of the Sultan.⁷⁰

Gift addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet

Muhammad Fadlullah al-Burhanpuri, a Gujurati Sufi of the *Syattariyyah tarekat*, completed a treatise on *tasawwuf* called *Al-Tuhfa al-Mursala ila Ruh al-Nabi* (*Gift addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet*) in 1590. It became remarkably popular in Indonesian Sufi circles from the 17th century and was used by Shamsuddair, al-Raniri and Abd ar-Ra'uf.⁷¹ The *Tuhfa* is concerned with orthodox Sufi teachings that God is Being, proceeding to the visible world through six stages of emanation from the hiddenness of God, the first three grades being uncreated, thence through the world of Spirits, Ideas and Bodies to the world of the Perfect Man.⁷² The *Tuhfa* promotes a mystical knowledge of Ibn al-Arabi's *Unity of Being*, with God as the source of all, there being nothing other than God, so that individual things may not be equated with God.

Canto I, Stanza 37

Unity but not identity is a definition of life
though the last end of all is unity,
[thus] do not think of your self.
The definition of one is
that there is no second.

Here the author warns against the doctrine that God is actually, materially immanent in the world.⁷³ Johns construes the Javanese author using all the scattered elements of Sufi teaching that he knew, the greater part of which can be traced to Malay sources. Javanese/Hindu cultural influence can be seen in the author's metaphorical use of the relationship between *Visnu* and *Kresna* to describe that of God to the visible world (Canto I, Stanza 12), *Visnu* and *Kresna* well known in popular *Wayang Kulit* puppet theatre, the greatest influence on Javanese religion and used as religious examples in Sufi Islam.⁷⁴

Canto II, Stanza 20.

There is a mirror and One, the second
is the reflection
there is no otherness of being ;
the looker is seen [reflected]
[but] he is not other [than what he] sees.⁷⁵

The analogy of the Mirror comes from Ibn al-'Arabi, again accompanied by a warning, as this seems to have been an idea commonly misunderstood in Aceh.

Canto II, Stanza 21.

Be sure you accept correctly
the meaning of One and the mirror,
understand this in its proper sense,
do not accept it in a mistaken [way],
understand these metaphors
and the meaning of 'return' :
do not [claim yourself] to become God.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Al-Attas, 1970, p.30, p.22-23.

⁷¹ Burhanpuri, *Tuhfa*. Trans. Johns, 1965, pp.8-9.

⁷² Burhanpuri, *Tuhfa*. Trans. Johns, 1965, p.5.

⁷³ Burhanpuri, Canto I, Stanza 37. *Tuhfa*, trans. Johns, 1965, p.49, pp.111-112.

⁷⁴ Johns, 1965, p.18, pp.16-17, p.106.

⁷⁵ Burhanpuri, Canto II, Stanza 20. *Tuhfa*. Trans. Johns, 1965, p.71.

⁷⁶ Burhanpuri, Canto II, Stanza 21. *Tuhfa*. trans. Johns, 1965, p.73.

One instance worth noting 'Do not declare yourself God', as Johns claims, is perhaps significant because this warning does not occur in the Arabic.⁷⁷ Localized understanding of Sufi theosophy has been important in Indonesia and Al-Attas explains how the *Tufah*, like the work of Raniri, reflects the Indonesian more than the Indian milieu.⁷⁸

Canto III, Stanza 7.

The ways to God
are more numerous than
the total numbers of breaths [drawn]
by all of his creatures.⁷⁹

As Canto III, Stanza 16 reiterates the basic theme of the work: Nothing exists in its own right. As Johns points out this *Tuhfa* presents to the Javanese a clearly persuasive text on the basic minimum of Islamic practice as a fine example of the devoted work of the Sufi brotherhoods (*tarekat*).⁸⁰

Walisongo. The Nine Saints of Java.

The legendary *Walisongo* of Java are widely venerated to this day by many Indonesians, and renowned for spreading Islam through Indonesia during the late 1400s and early 1500s. These holiest of Islamic leaders were the *Wali* or 'friends of God', who were so venerated that after death their tombs have become places of pilgrimage. These charismatic mystical teachers were often elevated then to the rank of *wali* by their followers.⁸¹ Trimingham explains that in Islam the *wali* enjoy God's special protection and, although capable of performing miracles, hold a lower rank than the prophets.⁸² The legendary *Walisongo* of Java were Sunan Malik Ibrahim, Sunan Ngampel, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Giri, Sunan Kudus, Sunan Drajat, Sunan Muria, Sunan Gunung Jati and Sunan Kalijaga.

The *Walisongo* Council of Sufi masters was formed by Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat) around 1474, always consisting of nine members in fulfillment of the sacred number. When one departed the council another was elected by the remaining members. Sunan Ampel's first son, Raden Makdum Ibrahim, later known as Sunan Bonang, resided in Daha with the title *Pangeran Anyakrawati*. He was assigned to manage Bonang, near Tuban, then becoming Sunan Bonang. Sunan Bonang was then helped by his disciple Raden Sahid in maintaining the Bonang region. Raden Sahid was the son of the ruler of Tuban, and later became Sunan Kalijaga.⁸³

The Admonitions of Seh Bari

This 16th century Javanese Muslim text attributed to the Saint of Bonan, translated by G.W.J. Drewes (1969), was said to be the work of Paneran Raden Machdum Ibrahim, later known as

⁷⁷ Johns, 1965, p. 119

⁷⁸ Al-Attas, 1970, p.200

⁷⁹ Burhanpuri, Canto III, Stanza 29. *Tuhfa*. trans. Johns, 1965, p.81-83.

⁸⁰ Johns, 1965, p.123, p.20

⁸¹ Schimmel, 1992, p.121-122.

⁸² Trimingham, 1971, p.26

⁸³ Roland, 2003, www.

Sunan Bonan(g), the greatest saint of East Java and one of the famous *Walisongo*. In the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, Sunan Bonang is said to be the son of Sunan Ngampel-Denta.⁸⁴ Otherwise known as *The Book of Bonang*, this orthodox treatise on *tasawwuf* was written expressly in opposition to heretical mystical doctrines identifying God with not-being.⁸⁵ In the Javanese text, *Seh Bari* is also called ShekhulBari or Sheihk al-Bari, while Drewes cannot determine whether this Sufi was a Persian from Mecca or living locally in the area of Karang, near Banten. The work reflects the widespread sweep of Sufi ideas known in Java at the time of its writing. The first twelve verses speak directly to the reader while from verse 13 onward the text takes the form of questions with answers from Seh Bari. The questioners are referred to as *Rijal*, meaning 'Men' in Arabic. The text opens with an explanation on the meaning of 'negation' and 'affirmation' as contained in the *Shahada*.⁸⁶

Seh Bari's teachings reject Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine that the development of the world should be compared to the growth of a tree from a little seed.⁸⁷ The significance of the *Hadith Qudsi*, *al-insan sirri wa'ana sirruhu*, 'Man is my secret being and I am his', is also explained. Sunan Bonan's teachings at the synod of Walis state that, at the *iman* (faith) stage, the believer still sees himself; at the *tokid* (*tauhid*) stage he sees himself no more but only Allah; and at the final stage (*mari'fat*) he sees neither himself nor Allah, because of the unification of vision.⁸⁸ There is an admonishment against acceptance of the *Karramiyya*, according to which *iman*, *tauhid* and *ma'rifa* are not to be sought with man but with God. Seh Bari explains the reason for this error is that the three grades apply only to man but do not pertain to Allah the most high.⁸⁹ *Iman* or Faith is Yes, *Tauhid* or Unity is 'only Yes' and *Mari'pat* (Gnosis) 'purely No'. The confession of unity is a mere 'yes', because the eye of *tawhid* does not pay heed any more to 'yes' and 'no', so that at this stage all is 'yes'.⁹⁰ 'The result of his vision is nothing but God's vision', or as Drewes describes, the result is not negative but positive.⁹¹ Seh Bari advises man to mend his ways and follow the words of Imam Ghazali as dealt with in this book. Seh Bari also advises: keep to the five ritual prayers; practice charity; make the inward offering, and the concealed offering as is the situation of the ritual prayer of saints and true believers; the result is expressed, in the text, by '*wattikadt* (dogmatic belief) *walimani* (faith) *watohidi* (confession of unity) *walmarifati* (mystical knowledge). Know that their devotion owes its superiority to the fact it is realized by Love, springs from it and is directed by it.'⁹²

⁸⁴ Fox, 1989, p.25-26

⁸⁵ Djajadiningrat, 1958, www.

⁸⁶ Drewes, 1969, p. 10, p. 15

⁸⁷ Drewes, 1969, p.27, p.36, pp.59-61

⁸⁸ Drewes, 1969, p.21

⁸⁹ Drewes, 1969, p. 16, p. 57

⁹⁰ Drewes, 1969, p.71

⁹¹ Drewes, 1969, p.89

⁹² Drewes, 1969, p.90-91

The Diary of a Javanese Muslim

Ann Kumar's translation and commentary on *The Diary of a Javanese Muslim. Politics and the Pesantren 1883-1886*, focuses on the religious life and daily existence of Mas Juragen Somereja, or Mas Rahmat as he refers to himself. This diary, showcasing the personal life of a Sufi teacher in central Java, uncovers the human foibles of a self-recognized holy man who presents himself as a mature and learned *santri* in *pesantren* life, although he was also affiliated with the *Kraton*, or royal court in central Java. It seems he was also a wealthy man, known in trade as a landowner of some considerable means, which is mentioned in passing in a letter from his wife. This diary relates his journey to pilgrimage sites, visiting the graves of Sunan Ngampel and Sunan Giri in East Java. Mas Rahmat then goes to pray in a cave in the mountains, later continuing on to the grave of a revered *syekh* of Madura. Kumar notes that Mas Rahmat's use of betel nut and opium for his health was religiously acceptable in small amounts. The writer stresses his own superiority, exposing a high degree of rivalry with his traveling companion *Haji Nurjali*.⁹³ While his rivalry with his traveling companion may at first seem out of character for a Sufi, it displays a candid insider's view of rural *pesantren* life of the period. Among the books listed he includes Burhanpuri's *Tuhfa*. Mas Rahmat portrays himself as a *kyai* of great presence and leadership although Kumar believes he was not affiliated with any particular *tarekat*.⁹⁴ Mas Rahmat mentions the performance of *dzikr* which Kumar describes as being practiced in three stages, that of the tongue, of the heart and *dzikr* of the inmost being, the *sirr*. According to Kumar, "the *Sirr* is conceived of as more subtle than the spirit (*ruh*), and is located in the heart. It is through the *sirr* that *tawhid* - the confession of divine unity and the unification of the self with God - takes place." Mas Rahmat makes no hesitation in describing himself as a holy man endowed with considerable *berkah*, telling how many people frequently spend the night in his company to 'obtain *berkah*' from him. There is even mention of the mysterious appearance of parcels of food.⁹⁵

In summary, in these historical references to Indonesian *Tasawwuf* we perceive a meaningful cultural plurality expressing itself in the mystical musings of these religiously sensitive people. Despite the diversity of interpretation, the texts display an individuality unique to the Indonesian character, making obvious their natural acceptance and engagement with the mystical and philosophical ideas of classical *tasawwuf*. This both intrigued them as well as harmonized with their own instinctual, mystical nature. The poetry of Hamzah Fansuri and the poetic interpretation of the Javanese writer of al-Burhanpuri's *al-Tuhfa* highlight the spiritual insight and devotion to Indonesia's earliest Sufi texts.

Having encountered the ingenuous spirit of a Javanese Sufi, without a hint of guile in his exposition of himself, we have witnessed a kaleidoscopic glimpse into the textuality of the Sufi

⁹³ Kumar, 1985, p.1, p.15, p.25, p.27, p.59.

⁹⁴ Kumar, 1985, p. 64, pp. 69-70, pp.88-89, p.93.

⁹⁵ Kumar, 1985, p.73-74, p.88

way towards *tauhid*. The fact that at least some of the *Walisongo* were rulers of harbour states⁹⁶ points to a significant power bestowed by the populace which later became available for social change. To this day, the legend of the *Walisongo* is taught in Javanese schools, for Indonesia is rightly proud of its Sufi past, and actively promotes its mystical history. Indonesian aspirants of *Tasawwuf* held such desire for knowledge of God, they delved into the most erudite texts available and some among them were able to explicate from this knowledge some poetic expressions of great beauty, making available, often in quite everyday ideas, the esoteric vision of *Tauhid*, the hidden reality of existence.

The emphasis on studying the insights and wisdom of the great classical masters alongside other Sufi disciplines provides that link between tradition and modernity which is often missing in secular curriculums that can lead to alienation and anomie. Indonesian Sufi texts might therefore provide a ready ground from which to formulate suitable teaching material for even relatively new students of the Sufi secrets of unity.

This mystical nation of over two hundred million souls is now emerging from its ancient history and taking on the modern world while still, perhaps almost magically, retaining its mystical dynamic hidden within the embrace of its many-layered religious outlook.

Canto II, Stanza 29.

The being of every existing thing
Is the being of God
In respect of its reality.
As in the example of wave
with sea :
Understand the unity and difference
between wave and sea.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Van Bruinessen, 1998, p.201

⁹⁷ Burhanpuri, Canto II, Stanza 29. *Tuhfa*. Trans. Johns, 1965, p.75.

3. Popular Sufism and the *Tauhid* of Common Unity.

As an integral part of popular Islamic mysticism, Sufism or *Tasawwuf* has long been accepted by the majority of Indonesian Muslims as a normative aspect of Islam. One long standing popular Sufi tradition has been the sustained viability, particularly in rural Java, of the *Pesantren* system of Islamic education. Another side of popular Sufism hinges on the spiritual grace or *baraka* (*berkah*) believed to emanate from the tombs of the Sufi saints, these having become well established pilgrimage sites, particularly in Java. Sufism spiritually reforms its disciples, generating humanitarian ideals as a sacred duty and this is expressed in Sufi healing practices. Martial arts have also traditionally been used to introduce Sufi *Tarekat* teachings to young men. All these customs of popular Sufism survive and flourish in Indonesia to this day, attracting many thousands of adherents to sustain the relevant rituals.

Nasr explains the difference between popular Sufism and that of the elect group who studied the deeper concepts of *Tasawwuf* combined with advanced spiritual practice. Popular Sufism brings the blessings of spiritual power (*berkah*) to large numbers of people who are usually passive participants rather than active travelers along the path to spiritual perfection. "The distinction between the elite (*khawass*) and commoners (*awamm*) can actually be found throughout Islamic society, *khawass* referring to those who possess advanced spiritual knowledge and exceptional virtue."⁹⁸ Both approaches to Islamic Sufism fulfill spiritual needs within society, the popular expressions of spirituality providing that emotional link to devotion which legalist Islam might seem to subvert, while for others the desire for a spiritual intercessor may be felt as vital.

Baraka and Pilgrimage.

The *Walisongo*, or nine Sufi apostles of Java, are highly revered as saints by thousands of modern day pilgrims who visit their tombs in the belief that some of their *berkah* (*baraka* or spiritual grace) will be endowed to them during prayers at the sites. The relationship between the *wali* and society was always dependent on the charismatic authority exercised by the saint. Over time, the community of devotees acknowledges the possession of this *beraka* flowing from the mutuality of devotion they feel, a veneration that is never static as the process of hagiography is ongoing. As Dutch colonial writer C. Snouck Hurgronje noted "Almost every Moslim village has its patron saint ... intermediate between the Creator and common mortals. In no other particular has Islam more fully accommodated itself to the religions it supplanted. This popular practice was favoured by the theory of intercession of the pious dead, of whose friendly assistance people might assure themselves by doing good deeds in their names and to their eternal advantage."⁹⁹ This practice is called *Ziarah*, and is popularly found throughout the Islamic world.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Nasr, 2002b, p.177.

⁹⁹ Hurgronje, 1937, pp. 54-85.

¹⁰⁰ Barton, 2002, p.68

The ordinary Moslim visitor of the graves of saints does not trouble himself with this ingenious compromise between the severe monotheism of his prophet and the polytheism of his ancestors. He is firmly convinced that the best way to obtain the satisfaction of his desire after earthly or heavenly goods is to give the saint whose special care these are what he likes best; and he confidently leaves it to the venerated one to settle the matter with Allah, who is far too high above the ordinary mortal to allow of direct contact.¹⁰¹

In visiting a Sufi tomb in Java, sacred timing is crucial. The optimal time is from midnight to 3 am. Once every '35 day month' the tomb is accessible, opening the night before the designated day. The most popular tombs attract up to fifty thousand visitors, each being given only a minute or so inside. Each tomb has its own custodian or *jurukunci* (key bearer), with their own version of the life story of the *wali*, often varying from the many published versions.¹⁰² Ex-president Wahid regularly visits his father's grave to pray and recite passages from the *Qur'an* in the middle of the night, continuing to do so during the period of his office. Such traditions are a popular focus of devotion and the graves of the founding *kyai* at Jombang are now visited by many thousands of pilgrims annually.¹⁰³

***Pesantren* Sufi learning.**

The uniquely Indonesian *pesantren* schools are still widely represented throughout rural Indonesia with youngsters often attending from an early age. The *pesantren* is often a boarding establishment combining Islamic subjects with a living example of the *kyai* or *syekh* expressing the purity of Islam as a way of life. *Pesantren* have existed in Indonesian for several hundred years with many of the local *ulama* (Islamic scholars) having graduated from these schools. In fact many of Indonesia's finest intellectuals and politicians have received their formative education in this way. Clifford Geertz has made a somewhat arbitrary division of the adherents of Islamic mysticism in Java into *santri* and *abangan*, with a competing mix of orthodox *Santri* following Islamic *Tasawwuf* in contrast to the rural *Abangan* involved in more syncretic forms of Sufi mysticism known as *Kebatinan*.¹⁰⁴ In comparing the Sumatran and Javanese *pesantren* we might find that the Sumatran *santri* are usually far more orthodox, whereas Java does see a competing mix of orthodox *Santri* in contrast to the Javanese *Abangan*. This tends to be an intuitive system based on instinctual feelings whereas the *kesantren* system takes a rather more intellectual, head-centred approach.¹⁰⁵ Bambang Pranowo, writing of the Javanese *Tegalrejo Pesantren*, and in particular of *Kyai Chudlori*, a highly respected teacher of *tasawwuf*, mentions the tradition of *kidmah* - the service a *santri* must render to his *kyai* to obtain his blessing and ensure that, in future, the knowledge acquired will remain spiritually and scholastically potent.¹⁰⁶ Tegalrejo became so famed for the quality of its spiritual teaching it was chosen as the

¹⁰¹ Hurgronje, 1937, pp. 54-85.

¹⁰² Fox, 1989, pp.20-22

¹⁰³ Barton, 2002, p.109

¹⁰⁴ Geertz, 1976, Ch.10

¹⁰⁵ Van Bruinessen, 1998, p.203

¹⁰⁶ Pranowo, 1989, p.41

venue for the national congress of Sufi *tarekat* in 1957.¹⁰⁷

While many *pesantren* remain aligned to traditional practice, others have become progressively modernized by developing a range of business activities, from agriculture and marketing to broadcasting and education. The *Al-Bidayah Naqshbandi Pesantren* in the small town of Cangkorah outside Bandung, under Haji Yayat Rohyat Sirodj, offers a complete Islamic education including *fiqh*, *tauhid*, *tasawwuf*, philosophy and Arabic, as well as teaching English, mathematics, science and computer studies to prepare students for work. The Sufi teacher always provides a living example of Islamic practice for the 750 students, 300 of whom there are boarders.¹⁰⁸ Reciprocal tutoring is a feature of the *pesantren* system, with younger students learning from those above, all the way up to the *kyai*, thus maintaining an informal management of learning and brotherhood.¹⁰⁹

Abdurrahman Wahid, a highly respected *kyai*, long-term leader of *Nadlatul Ulama* and former President of Indonesia, describes the *pondok pesantren* system of Islamic boarding schools as having been a significant feature in South East Asia for several centuries.

The word *pesantren* means place students live together for certain time under a *Kyai* or *Sheikh*, assisted by others teachers, known with the term *Asatidz* (sing: *Ustadz*). The word *pesantren*, which is known as a place where the Santris live. The Moslem *Kyai/Abu/Tuan/Guru/Sheikh* live in a compound called *Surau (Musholla)*. They attend their "true souls" by mastering the so-called 'Islamic Sciences' (*Al-'ulum Al Islamiyyah*), a cluster of disciplines revealing various 'Islamic' disciplines as well as based on 'Islamic' ethics in their daily behavior. In that place, the students follow the exemplary pattern of life 'taught' by their *Kyai* or *Sheikh*. They were known as *Santri*, practicing the 'Islamic' way of life as espoused by their teachers.¹¹⁰

Wahid sees the *pesantren* as a community learning center (*pusat pengembangan masyarakat*) believing that "the *pesantren* in the future could become a unique educational system, where ideological and non-ideological attitudes can live together."¹¹¹

During the 20th century, with the coming of mass education after independence, religious education has become the activity of a large minority, with about 15% of adolescent Indonesians following *pesantren* and *madrasah* education.¹¹² Abdurrahman Mas'ud believes that individualism and independence leading to responsibility are recommended by Islam and are vitally important to Indonesian education. He advocates a religious humanism that seeks to emphasize the duty of individuals to bond with God and their fellow humans, stressing pragmatism, individualism, a thirst for knowledge of God and the world, pluralism, contextualism, functional rationalism, and a balance between reward and punishment as motivational strategies. As Muhammad Kamal Hassan writes, the role of *pesantren* as an educational and a socio-cultural institution has received a great deal of scholarly attention with a

¹⁰⁷ Pranowo, 1989, p.45.

¹⁰⁸ Naqshbandi, 1997, April. Day 2. www.

¹⁰⁹ Alwasilah, 2002, Dec. 6, www.

¹¹⁰ Wahid, 27 Februari, 2003, www.

¹¹¹ Wahid, 27 Februari, 2003, www

¹¹² *Islam in Indonesia*, (n.d.). www.

view to making it a dynamic agent of change in rural Indonesia, and will see Indonesian education the most dynamic and most crucial in the region.¹¹³

A Muslim teacher's primary responsibility is to prepare students to be pious individuals who recognize their social, religious and universal responsibilities. The Muslim teacher's job is to transfer knowledge and values. The values to be taught are those that will enable the student to acquire a sense of personal responsibility and to reach perfection of *istikmal*.¹¹⁴

Advantages are gained by *pesantren* adapting to the modern world where technological skills are needed for students to be competitive. For the past 25 years the U.S. Agency for International Development has provided technical assistance to *pesantren*.¹¹⁵ A training program in the U.S. for *pesantren* leaders is also funded by the U.S. Department of State.¹¹⁶ Such opportunities for Indonesian *kyai* to receive U.S. educational training broadens their view on world affairs, developing understanding and tolerance for secular and other religious values. *Pesantren* leaders, ultimately concerned with imparting "traditional morality" to students who will lead Indonesia in modernization and globalization, stress the importance of experiencing a moral education. Such lessons called *ngaji*, teaching moral behaviour, involve the teaching of an Arabic text requiring experience (*pengalaman*) at its center within a practically moral religious environment.¹¹⁷

On the other hand, *Pesantren* education may be disadvantaged from over-reliance on its traditional *modus operandi* such as the absolute authority and veneration for the *kyai*, particularly where an infiltration by radical Islamist values under the influence of foreign (in particular Saudi) funding. Because of the distinct possibility of corruption, interference with national integrity in response to funding conditions, from either the U.S. or Saudi Arabia, each with their quite opposite and extreme agendas, would readily occur in Indonesia. Some *pesantren* have been suspected of disseminating extremist propaganda. One such is *Pondok Ngruki Pesantren*, in Central Java, whose spiritual leader, Abu Bakar Basyir, has been associated with the loose network of radical Islamists with alleged terrorist associations¹¹⁸ and recently convicted by the Indonesian Court. Another controversial *pesantren*, *Al Zaytun* near Jakarta, was investigated by the *Ulama Council*, *MUI*, for questionable leadership and funding, with warnings issued to parents of its deviational activities.¹¹⁹

The Saudis consider Sufism to pollute the purity of Islam, so their support would also appear to undermine the traditional teachings of the *kyai*. *New York Times* reporter Jane Perlez reports that Saudi finance supports five year courses while quietly promoting strict Wahhabi forms of Islam in Indonesia. The Saudi charity *Al Haramain* also finances educational institutes in Indonesia and

¹¹³ Hassan, 1987, p.49, p.51.

¹¹⁴ Mas'ud, 2002, www.

¹¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, 2002, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/13615.htm>

¹¹⁶ Faisal, 2002, *Tempo Interactive*, www.

¹¹⁷ Lukens-Bull, 2000, www.

¹¹⁸ ICG Asia Briefing, 2002, Aug. 8, www.

¹¹⁹ Onn, 2003, Feb 6, www.

even libraries from the renowned *Gontor Pesantren* are filled with Saudi books.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, we may hope that the Sufi Indonesians are unusually canny enough to accept the material support while continuing to creatively countermeasure any subversive propaganda.

Despite their longstanding reputation for traditionalism, there have been marked efforts to reform the *pesantren*. Emerging young *Nahdatul Ulama* cadres are more responsive than their seniors towards new ideas and the challenges of modernity, including democratic reform. Intellectual development of young *kyai* is facilitated through discourse at the *Centre for the Development of Pesantren and Society, P3M*, engaging in cooperative ventures with *pesantren* as centres for community development. One of the most recent activities, supported by the Ford Foundation, is a forum for women *kyai* to discuss feminist issues from a scholarly Islamic perspective.¹²¹ Overall however, Indonesia's *pesantren* have established the spiritual groundwork, not only for promulgating traditional Islamic learning, but often providing the setting for the many Sufi *tarekat* throughout Indonesia. Before leaving the *pesantren* world we may point out the parting words bequeathed to the *santri* after the death of renowned *Kyai Chudlori*, "after finishing your study here you should teach people about religion, as well as you can".¹²² Here is the essence of the Sufi agenda, a deep longing to share one's devotion to God far and wide, the Sufi heart remaining always in tune with the purest revelation of the Prophet Muhammad.

This is my way: resting upon conscious insight accessible to reason. I am calling you all to God –
I and they who follow me. (*Qur'an*, 12:10)¹²³

The Sufi orders or *Tarekat*.

Sufi orders, following the *tarekat* or path of historic masters, are common through much of Indonesia and have, from time to time, held great influence over the people. Islamic *Tasawwuf* is the subject matter of the many Indonesian *Tarekat* well established throughout the archipelago. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Mecca was an important centre of diffusion for the various *tariqas*.¹²⁴ The *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca, contributed towards the further spread of Sufi development in Indonesia as many would stay on in Mecca to deepen their understanding of the true Islamic path. Until the 20th century the orders were well represented in Mecca and Medina where many Indonesians received training in *tasawwuf* and were often inducted into more than one order.

Tariqat is the firm intention of the *shari'ah* ... the resolution to follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet as completely as possible in every aspect, both external and internal, exposed and hidden, exoteric and esoteric, physical and spiritual. To follow *Tariqat* the *murid* puts his trust in the judgment of the authorized, living *Shaykh* for the correct application of the guidance of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*. He must have the '*adab* of anticipation,' he must constantly await the orders of his guide ... being oblivious to all other directions ... he should always be ready to carry out some new order. Such a

¹²⁰ Perlez, 2003, July 5, *New York Times*. www.

¹²¹ Effendi, 1997, www.

¹²² Pranowo, 1989, p.47

¹²³ Yusuf Ali, 1968, *The Holy Qur'an*, 12:10.

¹²⁴ Trimingham, 1971, p.252

man will be a master of the *adab* of the Exalted Naqshbandi Order, and this *tajalli* (manifestation) will become apparent in him.¹²⁵

The largest of the *tarekat* in Indonesia are the *Qadiriyya* and *Naqshbandiyya*. Other prominent orders are the *Syattariyya*, *Syadhiliyya*, *Khalwatiyya*, *Tijaniyya* and *Idrisiyya*.¹²⁶ Although introduced early, the *Syattariyya* order only gained momentum during the later period of Islamic revival.¹²⁷ While initially the *Syattariyya* Sufi order held power in the region of Ulakan in West Sumatra, the *Naqshbandiyya* later emerged supreme.¹²⁸ A Minangkabau sheik who had been introduced to the *Naqsyabandiyya* in Mecca, initiated the order into Indonesia around 1845.¹²⁹

The Sammaniyya Tariqa, founded by Syeikh Muhammad bin Abdul Karim al-Samman (d.1775) of Medina, the guardian of Muhammad's tomb, combined the practices of the *Khalwatiyya*, *Qadiriyya*, *Naqshbandiyya* and *Syadhiliyya tarekat*. It was brought to Sumatra by Syeikh Abdus Samad al-Falimbani under the patronage of the Sultan of Palembang. Of the *Kadiriyyah* very little is known, but the *Nakshabandiyyah* established *surau* near the large and prosperous centres, or villages located at the junctions of trade routes.¹³⁰ The *guru tarekat*, masters of the Sufi movements, created their own networks, like some secret society. The *kyai* teachers perform a leading role in many situations precipitating change. Underpinning their influence were undoubtedly the Sufi *tarekat* networks.

The central importance of the shaykh's role in guiding disciples goes back to the distinctive features of the *tariqa* were seen to lie in the practices that allow disciples to achieve the goal, and the *shaykh* alone was qualified to determine these. By remembering God (*dhikr*) and observing the *Sunnah*, one emptied oneself of false perceptions and prepared the ground for seeing things correctly.¹³¹

The hierarchical order of these Sufi brotherhoods enjoined strong attachment between the *syehk* or *guru* (teacher) and *murid* (pupil), effectively building a strong force that could be used for political ends.¹³² During the late 1800s the *tarekat* underwent significant revival and the *Naqsyabandiyya* spread among the elite in West and Central Java.¹³³

During colonial times some of the *tarekat* exhorted their followers to challenge Dutch supremacy, in time coming to hold great influence over the people with their charismatic leaders well equipped to motivate followers to rebellion. In 1891 *Naqsyabandiyya* rebels in Lombok rose up against Mataram-Balinese rule but the Dutch intervened to quell the rebellion. In Sumatra during the 1670s to 1680s and early 1700s the *tarekat* teachers were in the forefront of all struggles to remove the Dutch from Padang. By the eighteenth century there were three Sufi orders, *Naqsyabandiyyah*, *Syattariyyah* and *Kadariyyah* flourishing in Minangkabau. The *surau* were integrated well into village life as the *tarekat* leaders were adept at accommodating local

¹²⁵ www.TheNaqshbandiWayofDhikr/difference.html

¹²⁶ Van Bruinessen, 1994 a, pp.1-23

¹²⁷ Carey, 1979, p.101

¹²⁸ Abdullah, 1987, p.88

¹²⁹ Trimingham, 1971, pp.121-122

¹³⁰ Dobbin, 1983, p.123

¹³¹ Chittick, 2002, www.

¹³² Van Bruinessen, 1994b

¹³³ Ricklefs, 1993, p.130

customs into their activities. The big highlands *surau*, attracting hundreds of students, might have had at least twenty buildings, often in self sustaining compounds producing food the students sold in the local markets.¹³⁴

In many areas of Java the *Naqsyabandiyya*, *Syatariyya* and *Kadiriyya* were so intensely at odds that leading religious authorities felt threatened and then discredited the *tarekat* with the Dutch authorities.¹³⁵ About 1890 in Minangkabau the lively propaganda of the *Naqshibandiyyah tarekat* alarmed the [Dutch] administration who set up instructions that the *adat* (customary system) should be set to work against any modernist religious reformers. One highly respected *Naqsyabandiya* sheik resorted to propaganda in favour of communism on a religious footing. Other *tarekat* were also encouraged to subscribe to the movement in the interests of social justice for all.¹³⁶ With increased membership the *tarekat* became an effective front for political protest. *Tarekat Kadiriyya* played a significant role in preparation for the Banten revolt in 1888.¹³⁷

Known *tarekat* movements in the island of Madura, off the coast of east Java, at the turn of the century were the *Qadiriyya*, the *Naqsibandiyya*, and the *Syatariyya*. In the second decade of the twentieth century, the centre of the *Qadiriyyah* movement was Kwanyar in West Madura, its leader *Kyai* Zainal Abidin. Through the *Qadiriyyah* networks his influence on the island was considerable.¹³⁸ In Madura the three *tarekat* presently most active are the *Naqsyabandiyyah*, the *Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyyah* and the *Tijaniyyah*. The most widespread *tarekat* in Madura is likely to be the *Naqsyabandiyyah*, followed nowadays by the *Tijaniyyah*.¹³⁹

Bellah notes that Sufi brotherhoods (*tarekat* in Indonesia) tend to form new sub-orders composed of the followers of outstanding teachers, a fact he puts down to the quest for mystical union being aided by certain group exercises and by physical segregation for a length of time.¹⁴⁰ Indonesia's tendency towards syncretism led naturally to the formation of an original *Qadiriyya wa Naqsyibandiyya* order. This *Tariqa*, combining practices of the *Qadiriyya* and *Naqsyabandiyya*, was initiated by the highly respected Ahmad Khatib Syambas who spent his adult life in Mecca. He was well-versed in *aqidah*, *fiqh* and *tasawwuf*. With many students his *tariqa* subsequently replaced the *Samaniyya tariqa*.¹⁴¹ In recent times the two largest *tarekat* in Indonesia are the *Qadiriya* and the *Naqsyibandiya* Sufi orders. These orders, with a greater concern for orthodox ritual, forced the *Syatariyya* order to lose its predominant position in the Minangkabau area.¹⁴²

In the early 1960s some innovative *tarekat* emerged, like the *Wahidiyya*, founded by *Kyai* Abdul

¹³⁴ Dobbin, 1983, p.194, pp.121-122

¹³⁵ Carey, 1979, p.103

¹³⁶ Schrieke, 1966, Vol. I, pp.151-154

¹³⁷ Carey, 1979, p.102

¹³⁸ Kuntowijoyo, 1987, p.117

¹³⁹ Van Bruinessen, 1995

¹⁴⁰ Bellah, 1970, p.274

¹⁴¹ *Malay Archipelago*, (n.d.), www.

¹⁴² Ricklefs, 1993, p.142

Madjid Ma'ruf of the *Pesantren Kedunglo* in Kediri. Its major devotion consists of the recitation of a long prayer (*salawat*) composed by *Kyai* Abdul Madjid, allegedly under divine inspiration.¹⁴³ *Tarekat Qodiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyyah (TQN)* centred on *Pesantren Suryalaya* in West Java, quickly attracted a large following among the elite and members of the middle class, establishing activities in various places in Jakarta and surrounding areas.¹⁴⁴

For 99.9% of Sufis in the Muslim world Sufism is a path within Islam. Sufi tariqas have been moving into new environments since first there were tariqas for changes is part of the normal rhythm of Sufism. The Naqshbandiyya of Muhammad Nazim al-Haqqani (b.1922), a Turkish shaykh with many followers in Turkey, Syria and Malaysia [and Indonesia]. Al-Haqqani is a shaykh on the classic Islamic pattern, taking his *silsila* from a universally-accepted source, recognized by born Muslims in the Muslim world. Secondly, his tariqa is orthodox. Although not all his followers conform to the Islamic *Sharia* [Sacred Law], al-Haqqani is mostly successful in holding his followers to the *Sharia*.¹⁴⁵

According to Professor Jalaluddin Rahmat, thirty percent of Indonesia's Muslim population belong to various *tariqas*, the most prominent among them being the *Naqsyabandiya* and *Qadiriya*, while the majority of Indonesian Muslims, he says, subscribed to belief in *tasawwuf* of some kind¹⁴⁶

Modern Sufi healing.

The Sufi Way has important lessons for our own spiritual awakening. Sufi interests in healing point to ongoing concerns that all is not right with God's world, reminding us that human suffering is never to be neglected. This, in itself, accords with the importance of the quality of Compassion to the Muslim worldview. Sufi Healing is an Islamic spiritual therapy which has been practiced exclusively by Sufis for centuries. While healing the sick is considered the most superior service to humanity, it is always understood that the true Healer is God, the Sufis acting only as mediators. One Sufi Master, Muhammad Zuhri (b.1939), popularly known as *Pak Muh*, lives in a small village in Pati, Central Java. While he does not follow any particular *tarekat*, his outlook is discernable from his unique Sufi ideas. Some of his revolutionary work includes the setting up of the Barzakh Foundation which practices Sufi Healing. The esoteric dimension of healing is founded on Islamic theosophy.

Muhammad Zuhri: No object we encounter in the process of living is as simple as it appears. We can encounter such objects in their perfection only with the support of the millions of causes in the history of their coming into being, this history being a process of natural evolution and of cultural good offices involving a variety of scientific disciplines, skills, and the personae of their creators. This is symbolized in the *Qur'an* as a 'pen' in "Who taught by the pen" (Q96:4).

The understanding that 'the pen' is the chain of causes leading to the birth of each object will make us aware of the existence of the universe's services to cultural reality. As a consequence, an awareness will grow that we must respond in the most satisfactory way possible to each object by expressing its positive possibilities and ignoring its negative potentialities. This moral attitude will give rise to the high sense of responsibility we know as '*Ama ma'ruf nahi mungkar*' (enjoining good and forbidding evil). The effect of this will make an individual into a believer who is wholly united with the universe in an unending flow of creativity. This is not the same as merely feeling at

¹⁴³ Bruinessen, 1994a, www.

¹⁴⁴ Howell, 2001, www.

¹⁴⁵ Sedgwick, 1999, www.

¹⁴⁶ *Naqshbandi* Conference: Day 2, 1997, www.

one with the universe in a state of ecstasy or static meditation. Such a condition is a proof of ability to comprehend the Divine Command behind each object we meet.¹⁴⁷

The physical healing methods of the Sufis derive from the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. The Sufis treat disease by prayer (*salat*), giving spiritual nourishment to harmonize the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of life with traditional therapy, using fasting, *zikr* and specific objects. *Zikr*, as a method to cure mental or physical illness, is performed by repeating holy verses under supervision of a Sufi teacher. Formulations are written on amulets called *wisq*, placed in water to be drunk by the patient, or recited aloud or silently to cure not only mental or physical illness, but also to solve family, financial, or social problems.¹⁴⁸ Muhammad Zuhri explains the inner process by which spiritual healing is effected.

"Whatever good befalls thee, it is from Allah" (Q4: 79). This is because no one will do good without a dialog partner to set the good intention in motion. The willingness to express oneself well and rightly is what '*Hidayah*' (guidance) means, and the dialog partner capable of inspiring the expression of goodness and truth is the meaning of '*Taufiq*' (success), while the means enabling the two to bring it about is called '*Rahmat*' (mercy). As for the development process obtained by means of such a dialog relationship, it is called the Moment of *Tauhid* (the profession of Unity) or Wholeness in Allah.¹⁴⁹

The Barzakh Foundation accepts AIDS patients, without charge, from every country regardless of their sex, race or religion. The patient must already have been tested HIV+. The effective time of the treatment is three months and the Foundation will stop the treatment if the patient is not cured after six months. The result, however, is always up to God. The Barzakh Foundation hopes it will always submit itself to God in its struggle to serve the community.¹⁵⁰

Suryalaya ... specializes in the study of Sufism, the mystical form of Islam that stresses devotion to God and religious tolerance. Its 90-year-old leader is revered as a holy man who, according to tradition, can trace his teaching in a direct line back to Islam's prophet, Muhammad. Suryalaya's 30 drug rehab centers are called *Inabah*, or "returning to the correct path." They revolve around three Islamic principles: communal prayer, the chanting of God's name and ritual bathing.¹⁵¹

Sufi healing in the field of psychology recognizes a potential for the healing of the soul within the format of Sufi character development and purification of self-interest. It is less well known that Islam, even in its more orthodox sense, has a long tradition of healing through prayer through the recitation of formulas aimed at specific healing of the body and the soul. A psychological healing connection can be discerned from the work of *Zakya Maqta*, established by Bijak Bestari, who argues that Sufism can help in achieving integrity with the ego through the chanting of *dzikr* at least three hours a day. The *Zakya Maqta* introduced *dzikr* as a positive energy used to enhance the dimensions of inner power. It has quickly gained popularity through the support of ANTV, a private television station in Jakarta which regularly broadcasts its

¹⁴⁷ Zuhri, 1996, Writings, www.

¹⁴⁸ Barzakh Foundation, 2003, *Sufi Healing*, www.

¹⁴⁹ Zuhri, 1996: Writings, www.

¹⁵⁰ Barzakh Foundation, 2003, www.

¹⁵¹ Brummitt, 2002, August 16, www.

activities.¹⁵² Once again, we can see that any charges that Sufism is isolated in its own devotionalism are far from adequate.

The martial art disciplines of *pencak silat* are closely related to Sufi principles, being particularly entrenched within the Minangkabau *adat* while integrated with the Islamic will of *Allah*, this system becoming world famous for its gracefully controlled movements.

About 1365 the Minangkabau Kingdom arose in Central Sumatra and gradually converted to Islam during the sixteenth century. As most practitioners were Muslim, Sufism seems a likely root. There are at least sixty separate *silat* styles in the Indonesian archipelago. While some stress the practical need for defense others stress the esoteric (Sufis teaching youngsters to overcome their carnal selves). Graceful, almost choreographed movement characterizes traditional *silat* where skill is judged on aesthetics rather than knockouts, first blood, or scored points. The projection of inner power is part of the aesthetic, and the art is said to require an intimate personal relationship between teacher (*guru*) and student (*murid*).¹⁵³

The first of the four basic *silat* steps relates to the Islamic notion of *Sidiq*, the initial step upon the mystical path being one of collecting knowledge (*Ilm*). The second step relates to *Tabligh*, the search for the essence of all knowledge (*Nur*). The third step relates to *Amanah*, where collected knowledge is put into practice. The fourth is *Fatanah*, which is the final union with *Allah*. Each of these relate to four stages of Sufi education, *Syariah*, *Tarekat*, *Hakiqat* and *Mari'fat*. In the Minangkabau context *Silat* has traditionally been used to transmit the *Tarekat* mystical ideas as the Sufi teachings are introduced during self-defense classes.¹⁵⁴

Awakening Modern Practical Sufism

Modern Urban Sufism is spreading, attracting a variety of city dwellers while appealing particularly to a middle class caught up in the rapid modernization of city life. Rejecting the old charismatic authority in traditional Sufi orders, the newer forms of *Tasawwuf* are infused with the inner dimension of Islam, in keeping with the ideas of Al-Ghazzali and al-Junaid, closely allied to the *Syari'a* and the *Qur'an*. A range of novel activities identified with Sufism or *Tasawwuf* have become popular in Indonesia's major cities, from reflective spiritual reading to attending academically-styled private courses, informal prayer groups or healing workshops using *dzikr*. This new Sufism is now known as '*Tasawuf Positif*' or Practical Sufism.¹⁵⁵ The *Tarekat Naqsyabandiya* inspired by the late Kadirun Yahya has its own political forum, *Partai Cinta Damai* (Party of Loving Peace), prescribing *zikr* as the solution to Indonesia's political and economic problems and appeals to a certain political elite, influenced by the intellectual standing of its revered leader.¹⁵⁶ Sufism attracts people of both sexes who are still fully engaged in their careers, including some in positions of power. Sufi thought is being reinterpreted as a source of

¹⁵² Hasan & Mufid, 2002, www.

¹⁵³ Svinth, 2003, www.

¹⁵⁴ Barendregt, 2001, www.

¹⁵⁵ Howell, 2000, ISIM Newsletter 6:17, www.

¹⁵⁶ Woodward, 1999, www.

inspiration for contemporary religious practice and, once again, involving many more in the Sufi *tarekat*.¹⁵⁷

In today's modern cities the *Tarekat* and Universities are promoting a *Tasawwuf* informed with sophisticated intellectual ideas, mystical Islamic education being particularly pronounced among the elite. Such Sufi organizations in Jakarta include *Paramadina*, an elitist, urban religious institution with Nurcholish Madjid as one of its core members. Widely noted for his promotion of Liberal Islam in Indonesia, Nurcholish values the Islamic notion of *ijtihad*, or relevant interpretation in the spirit of *Tauhid* within Indonesia's New Sufism.¹⁵⁸ Jalaluddin Rahmat set up the 'Center for Sufism' in Jakarta called *Tazkiya Sejati*, offering Sufi education to the upper middle class.¹⁵⁹ *Tazkiyah* (promoting growth), also means purification, for impurity impedes growth; it is because the channels to and from the heart are blocked the fallen soul is stunted, at least in some elements.¹⁶⁰ Professor Jalaluddin, an expert in public communications and former follower of the 'reformist' *Muhammadiyah*, has become a firm believer in traditional Islam. Noting that a new breed of intellectuals and professionals are coming back to traditional Islam, Jalaluddin believes "they are looking for the Islam of love and peace such as that practiced by the followers of *Tassawuf*. Since the 1980s, traditional Islam which was once predominant in the rural areas, has now moved to the cities and displaced the 'modernist' Islamic movements."¹⁶¹

The good side of man (*tazkiyah*) should be cultivated, which creates self-discipline against evil. This creates his well-being, or *falah*. The individual Muslim is seen as benefiting spiritually in terms of increasing piety and rectitude, which are viewed as the antecedents of development.¹⁶²

Darut Tauhid, formed in 1987 by the very popular *Aah Gymn*, Abdullah Gymnastiar, offers to fill the 'spiritual void' of city life through *manajemen qalbu* ('management of the heart'), maintaining purity of heart in knowing God.¹⁶³ *Tempo* describes the *Darut Tauhid Pesantren* being engaged in successful business operations including agriculture, a minimarket, cottages, a radio station and a publishing house, with revenue from advertising and other sponsored programs.¹⁶⁴

A quick examination of Indonesian television today reveals that Islamic identity in Indonesia is not being swept away by Western influences. There we can witness the quietly confident evolving synthesis of traditional Islamic culture and modern culture.¹⁶⁵

In summary, we discover that popular Sufism contributes significantly to the experience of *Tauhid* in the Indonesian community. Indeed, as Robert Bellah points out, "the survival of popular religion and Sufism in the face of scripturalist attack indicates that scripturalism has not

¹⁵⁷ Howell, 2001, www.

¹⁵⁸ Kull, 2001, www.

¹⁵⁹ Hasan & Mufid, 2002, www.

¹⁶⁰ Lings, 1985, pp.82-83

¹⁶¹ *Naqshbandi* Conference: Day 2, 1997, www.

¹⁶² Cantori, 1997, www.

¹⁶³ Hasan & Mufid, 2002, www.

¹⁶⁴ Indonesia Mediawatch, 2002, Jan. 4, www.

¹⁶⁵ Wahid, 2002, Dec. 27 in *The Age*, www.

met all religious needs, however successful it is as an ideology.”¹⁶⁶ The continuing and accommodative function of the *Pesantren*, the survival of the Sufi orders, Sufi healing, and the *berkah* flowing through this popular Sufi devotion, all contribute towards moderating the uncertainties surfacing within Indonesian societies struggling to adapt to shifting circumstances.

In particular, the popular dissemination of Sufism may contribute to a widening of Islamic understanding, moderating the views of the modern intellectual elite by providing a known link between the modern world and the world of tradition. Sufism also promotes an awakened emphasis on social justice to balance commercial inroads against traditional spiritual values. While allowing for individual modernist expressions, the Sufi way stresses that this should be aimed for within an Islamic social framework, valuing the human diversity inherent in the pure concept of *tauhid*, for without a full recognition of the differences of the many, the call for Unity may even be ignored by the people.

¹⁶⁶ Bellah, 1970, p.166.

4. Political *Tauhid* for *Pancasila*, Tolerance and Unity

It is virtually impossible to seriously address religious interests in Indonesia without including something of the political dimension of Islam. While Indonesian Islam has long held political aspirations, it ever remains markedly different to that of the Middle East. Just as Religion concerns our human relatedness with our own self, to each other, to the world and ultimately to God, we find in Indonesian society an intuitive community focus, a phenomenon which becomes accentuated by Islam. Indonesian politics and religion are thus inextricably entangled, interwoven into a strange tapestry of organizations all vying for political recognition. Overriding this human interactivity is the theme of Unity tying all these relationships to God, as the One ultimate Reality belonging to all.

The concept of *tawhid* also is associated with political ideals. It suggests the organic solidarity of society or its corporatism (*takafaliya*). Individuals are related to the organic whole by the concept of *khilafah*, or the vicegerency of the individual as the expression of God on earth, constituting the brotherhood of man in the sharing of this vicegerency. Therefore, man is the custodian, or *amin*, of God's resources, meaning, in developmental terms, economic resources. As a result, individuals may acquire wealth in a capitalist fashion but only with the understanding that such wealth does not belong to them but to God.¹⁶⁷

Sufism is a practice utterly devoted to this aim with the explicit purpose of harmonizing facets of the self with devotion to the One and Only God. Indeed Robert Bellah claims "The rise of Sufism was accompanied by a tendency to sacralize political rule."¹⁶⁸ This, however, presents some serious problems of integrity in the area of democracy where modern Sufi thinkers like Nurcholish Madjid are urging reform. From a psycho-spiritual perspective there have been, historically, mutually beneficial interactions between Sufis and political figures. Safi lists three patterns of narrative between saintly figures and political elite which stand out in hagiographies:

1. the saint uses his divinely bestowed insight and clairvoyance (*firasat*) to forecast great success for figures well before they had achieved notoriety.
2. *baraka* - legitimizing accounts, portrays the saint receiving political figures who have already achieved worldly power, and blessing their success with his *baraka*.
3. the political figures' devotion (*iradat*) towards and patronage of the saints, their descendants, and the shrine-*khanagah* complexes associated with them.¹⁶⁹

The resulting buildup of political allegiance deriving from mass popular appeal also undoubtedly proved threatening to political power-brokers and various efforts have been made to induce reform.

Neo-Sufism, reform and Islam.

Indonesians making the yearly *hajj* to Mecca have always achieved significant respect in the Indonesian Muslim community, achieving status as well as religious merit. This has contributed to the influx of reformist ideas, as many pilgrims would remain for a time in Mecca and Medina to deepen their religious learning. The *hajj* has been instrumental in bringing not only Sufi ideas

¹⁶⁷ Cantori, 1997, www.

¹⁶⁸ Bellah, 1970, p.157.

¹⁶⁹ Safi, 2000, pp. 259-287

to Indonesia, but also the extreme views of Arabian Wahhabi inspired reformers calling for a renewed purification of lifestyle in a Pan-Islamist empire.¹⁷⁰ Wahhabi Islamists are overtly critical towards Sufism, accusing it of heresy. Nevertheless, from the 16th century, "pilgrims from Indonesia imbibed doctrines and ways of recentred *Sunni* Islam, returning to their homelands as beacons of orthopraxy."¹⁷¹ Sufi orders deriving from this movement were characterized by rejection of the ecstatic and metaphysical side of *Tasawwuf* and were known as Neo-Sufis. These orders included the *Tijaniyya*, *Ahmadiyya* and *Idrissiyya*, all opposed to Ibn al-Arabi and the veneration of saints, and sympathetic to the puritanical reformism of the Wahhabis.¹⁷²

At the start of the 20th century the masses were much more influenced by ideals based on Islamic concepts. 'Revival of Islam' had become a common ideal for missions of Muslims. Most Indonesian ethnic groups firmly adhered to the principles of Islam even if many of them never adjusted their way of life to the strict rules of the Koran.¹⁷³

From the early 19th century, many southern Arabian settlers from one of the most orthodox regions of Islam, migrated to the Archipelago further contributing ideas of Islamic reformism and Pan-Islam. "Pan-Islamic ideologues indirectly posed the question of permeable boundaries drawing attention to both ethnic nationalism (*qawmiyya*) and region-specific nationalism (*wataniyya*) as alternative polities - alternative not only to European rule, but also to the universal Muslim community."¹⁷⁴ This came to be known throughout the Islamic world as Islamism, more accurately translated from the Arabic *Islamiyah*, a term used by many Islamist movements,¹⁷⁵ and not only those with a radical agenda.

Islamist discourse emerged in the beginning of this century as a religious response to Western colonialism and the growing gap between the Islamic world and the West in science, economics, and technology. The fundamental tenets of Islamism, which could also be termed *shari'ah*-utopianism, are the inherent perfection of Islam as a way of knowing and living in the world as well as a religion, and the belief that the Islamicization of knowledge and social life will lead to a Muslim renaissance and, ultimately, to the decline or conquest of the morally decadent West.¹⁷⁶

The most significant dimension of history for contemporary Muslims is marked by European colonial expansion and consequent anti-colonial nationalism. With Indonesia having claimed its independence only in 1945, having not long emerged from its long colonial yoke, it is not surprising to find elements still interpreting the effects of modernization in terms of the vestiges of colonial domination. Chandra Muzaffer maintains, "these will want to assert a distinctive identity tending to emphasize the puritanical aspects of the religion since this will enhance its uniqueness."¹⁷⁷ Moreover, as Bruce Lawrence remarks, "Because most Muslims exist within post-colonial nation-states, the ubiquitous character of nationalism has to be acknowledged in

¹⁷⁰ Carey, 1979, p.99

¹⁷¹ Buillet, 1994, p. 177

¹⁷² Van Bruinessen, 1994a, pp.1-23

¹⁷³ Vlekke, 1965, p.349

¹⁷⁴ Lawrence, 1998, p.24.

¹⁷⁵ Woodward, (n.d.) *Gus Dur*. www.

¹⁷⁶ Van Bruinessen, 2002, www.

¹⁷⁷ Muzaffar, 1987, p.36

any discussion of contemporary Islam.”¹⁷⁸

One indication of the shallowness and superficiality of religious understanding among radical Islamists is the tendency to view matters relating to institutions and institutionalism as being the measure of success for Muslims. The reality is that many cultural aspects of Islam, such as an enduring passion for traditional music and the growing popularity of Sufi mysticism, are clear signs that Muslims and Islam are not, in fact, being swept away before an all-powerful tide of Westernisation.¹⁷⁹

Mark Mancall explains ‘fundamentalism’ as “a Western concept made possible by the sharp division we tend to make between the spiritual and the secular, between inner life and social life, a division unthinkable in Islamic terms.” Nevertheless, it is one currently and widely used to describe outlooks of a particular bias from the three major Semitic religions. Mancall claims that the “only place in Indonesia where the Wahhabi form of Islam has political significance is in the Aceh province of North Sumatra” aligning this with former Islamic militancy against the Dutch.¹⁸⁰ Those Indonesians of *Masyumi* (*Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims*) background studying abroad at prestigious Islamic institutes were influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, inspired by reforming ideas of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), also a Sufi, along with Abul-A‘la Mawdudi,¹⁸¹ whose revivalist ideas on *Tawhid* tended towards a reductionism that flowed on towards the Islamist movement.

Nadlatul Ulama. Organizing Sufism.

The proliferation of Indonesian organizations speaks for a strong and intrinsic community ideal inherent to the Indonesian psyche, as well as the unity that underwrites Islam in their lives. In 1926 the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (*Awakening of the Ulama*) was formed to offset the modernist *Muhammadiyah* organization which was established in 1913, and attracting a very large following. *Nahdlatul Ulama* is now the largest Muslim organization with close to forty million members. NU is an extremely hierarchical organization based on a complicated system to student/teacher relationships.¹⁸² It is founded upon the traditional Sufi relationship of the Syekh and his pupils. During the second half of the 20th century increasing numbers of NU (*Nahdlatul Ulama*) youth chose to study at Cairo’s *Al-Azhar* University.¹⁸³

The emblem of *Nahdlatul Ulama* combines symbols of Sunni doctrine, Sufism, and specifically Indonesian Islam. A green globe surrounded by a golden rope containing 99 twists symbolising the traditional 99 beautiful names of Allah. Above the globe are a large star, symbolising Muhammad, flanked by two pairs of small stars, symbolising the first four leaders of the Islamic community after the death of Muhammad who are known among Sunnis as the Four rightly guided Caliphs; a further four small stars below these symbolise the four schools of *shari‘a*; and the nine stars symbolise the nine ‘saints’ (a Sufi designation) who are believed to have first introduced Islam to Indonesia.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ Lawrence, 1998, pp. 23, p.10.

¹⁷⁹ Wahid, 2002, Dec. 27 in *The Age*, www.

¹⁸⁰ Shih, 2002, p.117

¹⁸¹ Van Bruinessen, 2002, www.

¹⁸² Woodward, 2001,

¹⁸³ Barton, 2002, p.130 www.

¹⁸⁴ ELMAR, 1998-9, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, www.

NU also harnesses the energies of the Sufi brotherhoods, for example the Naqsyabandiyyah and the Qadiriyyah.¹⁸⁵ In 1957, the *Rabitah Tarekat Muktabarah* was formed under *Nahdlatul Ulama* objectively to unify all forty-five sanctioned *tarekat*, and to examine claims of Sufi genealogy and provide certification of authenticity to preserve the *silsila* originating with the Prophet, and the teachings of *Tasawwuf*.¹⁸⁶ This organization has branches in each of the 27 provinces and 350 districts of the vast Indonesian archipelago representing the nearly 40 million Muslims who practice *Tasawwuf* in their daily lives. There is an educational complex attached to the Association headquarters with some of the 3000 students.¹⁸⁷

Abdurrahman Wahid describes "the essence of the study adhered to by NU as an endless involvement of the unity of God, Muslim law and mysticism between the earthly and heavenly dimensions of life."¹⁸⁸ With its huge membership, *Nahdlatul Ulama* remains significantly influential in both Islamic and political matters.¹⁸⁹

Pancasila, diversity and political tolerance.

The five *Pillars of Islam* and *Pancasila*, the five principles of the modern state, are both vitally important for the ongoing cohesion and stability of Indonesia. Sukarno's *Pancasila* incorporates an interpretation of *Tauhid* in alignment with *Islam*, investing *Pancasila* with an almost sacred importance for Indonesian democracy. (1) *Ketuhanan Maha Esa* (Devotion to God). (2) *Kemanusiaan yang adil dan berahad* (Human society which is just and characterized by mutual respect). (3) *Persatuan Indonesia* (Indonesian national unity). (4) *Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam bermusyawaratan, perwakilan* (Society governed by wise justice in mutual consultation and assistance) (5) *Keadilan sosial bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia* (Social justice for all the Indonesian people).¹⁹⁰ Sukarno, alluding to the mystic significance of the number five, stated that the five principles can be reduced to one principle, or *Eka sila*, which is actually *gotong royong*, implying mutual assistance for a united cause.¹⁹¹ The Indonesian lifestyle could identify with the qualities of *gotong royong* and *musyawarah* and *mufakat* (consultation and consensus) in the meantime provided a sense of unity that would bind men together in a national state.¹⁹² These were undoubtedly also the Islamic values that appealed the concerns of those Muslims actively seeking an Islamic state.

Sukarno: It's the principle of belief in God. It means that all Indonesians believe in God in the sense that the Christians believe in God in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Muslims in line with the teachings of Mohammed, the Buddhists practice their religion as prescribed in their holy scriptures. But we all together believe in God. The Indonesian state is a state where

¹⁸⁵ Nahdlatul Ulama, 1998-9, www.

¹⁸⁶ Mulyati, 2000, www. www.

¹⁸⁷ *Naqshbandi* Conference: Day 3, 1997, www.

¹⁸⁸ Wahid, 1987, p.179

¹⁸⁹ Nahdlatul Ulama, 1998-9, www.

¹⁹⁰ Woodward, 1998, www.

¹⁹¹ Sievers, 1974, p.8, p.10

- 1974, p.4. *Gotong royong* is a spirit of communion or harmony with participants, the spirits and the cosmos.

¹⁹² Van Niel, 1979, p.164

every believer can worship God according to his own choice of religion. The Indonesian people believe in God in a refined manner that is without the egoism of any one religion.¹⁹³

Abdurrahman Wahid (*Gus Dur*) claims a connection with *Pancasila*, explained that according to *Kyai* Masykur, his father *Kyai* Wahid Hasyim had invited several *ulama* to meet at Tebu Ireng Pesantren in 1945 to discuss the formulation of the constitution. They listed seventy principles presenting them to Sukarno who used these to formulate *Pancasila*. Wahid argues that because *Pancasila* reflected the basic principles of Islam there was no need to have an Islamic state.¹⁹⁴ Interviewed in *Prisma* in 1995, Wahid observed that democratic values are parallel with Islamic universal values. Although Democracy comes from the West, Gus Dur finds it acceptable on the basis of the cosmopolitan nature of Islamic civilization. He sees *Pancasila* as a contextualization of Islamic political values in Indonesia. Thus, there is a continuum from Islam to democracy and *Pancasila* that results in an integrative perspective between state and religion.¹⁹⁵ According to Ramage, both Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid favour “*Pancasila* enabling all Indonesians, Muslim and others, to follow their own religion in a religious, though not an Islamic state.”¹⁹⁶

Pancasila is the foundation which made it possible to overcome the tension between Islam and a secular national state in Indonesia and to demonstrate a successful pattern for harmonious unity of cultural-ethnically and religiously differing communities ... The adepts of *Pancasila* wanted to achieve a synthesis of cultural pluralism and secularism. *Pancasila* are the five principles monotheism, humanism, national unity, democracy and justice.¹⁹⁷

Nurcholish Madjid has shown that the language of *Pancasila* is derived from classical Arabic discussions of justice and the social contract which resonates strongly with traditional Javanese understandings of the relationship between ruler and ruled.¹⁹⁸ Nurcholish argues that “from 1985 [Muslims] began to find out even *Pancasila* could accommodate their religious interests” in the context of an Islamic society, saying that this was a “form of cultural and historical realism” not to be denied.¹⁹⁹

Pancasila puts Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists on an equal level. That's not only a revolution in Islamic thinking but also a translation of the mystical ideas of the great Sufi Muslim Ibn Arabi into a political program. The Sufi Islam's tolerance and its rejection of any dogmatism becomes a basis of political reality in Indonesia.²⁰⁰

Islam as a source of social, ethical and spiritual advice in a rapidly changing world has made inroads into the educated elite.²⁰¹ One of these with important modern ramifications is the emergence of Liberal Islam. The ideas of Fazlur Rahman (d.1988) were to affect Nurcholish Madjid, and other Indonesians studying in Chicago. Rahman championed a combination of

¹⁹³ Sukarno cited in Tibi, 1995

¹⁹⁴ Barton, 2002, p.140

¹⁹⁵ Mujiburrahman, 1999, pp.66-69.

¹⁹⁶ Ramage, 1995, p. 62

¹⁹⁷ Tibi, 1995, www.

¹⁹⁸ Woodward, 1998, www.

¹⁹⁹ Ramage, 1995, p.80

²⁰⁰ Tibi, 1995, www.

²⁰¹ Schwarz, 1999 pp.173-4

modernism and traditionalism necessary to lead Islam forward in the modern world, also arguing the need for *ijtihad*, or individual interpretation of the *shari'a* in light of the *Qur'an* as a necessary correlative to avoid stagnation in Islamic thought. Noting the intellectual decline of modernism in the second half of the 20th century as a motive for the reemergence of revivalism, Rahman advocated a "Neo-revivalism merging elements of modernist concern with technology and science for the betterment of society." While Liberal Islam dominated among committed Muslims in the student movement throughout the 1970s, more radical trends appeared in the 1980s after the suppression of student political activity in 1978 and the banning of students' associations like *HMI* from the campuses since the early 1980s.²⁰²

Neo-Modernist Sufi leaders. *Gus Dur* and *Cak Nur*.

The challenging role of reconciling the differing political factions of Islam with a particular kind of Sufi leadership introduces two intellectual Sufi cousins, Abdurrahman Wahid or *Gus Dur* having had his day as leader of his country, while Nurcholish Madjid or *Cak Nur* is now awaiting the right political nomination for the 2004 presidential Elections. Abdurrahman Addakhil Wahid (b.1940) is the son of Wahid Hasyim and grandson of Hasyim Asyari, the first *NU* president. Abdurrahman Wahid has played a leading part in the development of *NU* since 1984, having been elected its leader three times. In 1991 he founded the *Democratic Forum*, dedicated to promoting greater democracy in Indonesia, including freedom of expression.²⁰³ As the nation's President, Wahid stated that he personally followed the Islamic spiritual discipline of Sufism and had a long line of ancestry who followed the teachings of the *Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya*, a Sufi order unique to Indonesia.²⁰⁴ In the true Sufi spirit of accommodation, Wahid shows how Islam incorporates the principles of modern ethical values.

Abdurrahman Wahid has demonstrated that several basic principles in Islam commensurate with the universal declaration of human rights can be found in the classical literature on religious laws (*al-kutub al-fiqhiyyah*). The first principle of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights - protection from physical abuses outside the law, means that the existence of a government based on the rule of law, which guarantees equal treatments to the citizens along with their rights, is necessary. Also, Islam acknowledges the importance of impartiality in law enforcement and the centrality of justice as the foundation of a good society. This principle is undoubtedly similar to the universal declaration of human rights, which regards justice, equality and democracy as the fundamental norms in a democratic polity.²⁰⁵

Wahid believes it essential to bring faith and action together for the betterment of society. While he observes that the *Qur'an* requires Muslims address the plight of the disadvantaged, he believes to be the task of Muslim theologians, pointing out that theologians have not yet been able to reach consensus.²⁰⁶ The newest Muslim organization of note is *Indonesian Muslim Intellectual*

²⁰² Barton, 2002, pp.128-9

²⁰³ Nahdlatul Ulama, 1998-9, www.

²⁰⁴ Wahid, 2000, June 13, *ISCA*, www.

²⁰⁵ Hikam, 1997, www.

²⁰⁶ Woodward, (n.d.), *President Gus Dur*. www.

Association or *ICMI* with its stated goal to unify Indonesia's Muslim groups under one banner.²⁰⁷ Wahid does not see eye to eye with *ICMI* arguing that despite its stated purpose of encouraging Muslim intellectual community development, *ICMI* is a covert attempt to introduce the Islamist notion that all aspects of life must be exclusively and explicitly Islamic.²⁰⁸ For Wahid "Plurality is the essence of Indonesia - No one group can claim to be uniquely Indonesian."²⁰⁹ While Wahid's mystical form of politics aimed to reconcile volatile elements within the nation, and even though his hold on power was not sustainable within the complex arena of Indonesian politics, his charismatic spiritual call to vast sectors points to what is politically possible through Sufi persuasion in a nation like Indonesia. Gus Dur has even been likened to Winston Churchill in time of war.²¹⁰

The Islamic resurgence needs thinkers and leaders who are imbued with Islamic values, whose world-view is Islamic, but who at the same time understand not only weaknesses but also the strengths of Western civilization. At the moment such human beings are rare in the Muslim world.²¹¹

Nurcholish Madjid (b.1939), popularly known as *Cak Nur*, is also a descendent of the founder of *NU*, who received religious training at the famous Gontor Pesantren. One of Indonesia's most original thinkers with an intellectual purity derived from a Sufi background, his thought was deeply influenced by the Sufi master Al-Ghazzali.²¹² Nurcholish is a highly esteemed political and social commentator on Indonesia, and a firm supporter of democracy, human rights, pluralism, and religious tolerance having served on the *Indonesian Human Rights Committee*. He has been the leader of *HMI*, the Indonesian Student Movement in the 1960s, and once held a central position in *ICMI*. His *pesantren* background provided a solid Sufi based foundation to his spiritual understanding. Nurcholish advocates the straight path of Islam.

Plurality is the fact of life and the order of the world. When the teaching of obedience to God (*din-u 'l-Lâh*) emphasizes on the uniqueness of God as it is the central idea of true monotheism or *tawhid* it also makes clear that God is.²¹³

Professor Nurcholish, Rector of *University of Paramadina*, Jakarta, has researched Islamic thought and philosophy, Islamic reformism, Islamic culture, politics and religion, sociology of religion, and the politics of developing nations. He aligns democratic social justice with the authority of the *Qur'an* and sees Indonesian Islam as specific to Indonesia.²¹⁴

The spiritual reality of Islam is universal, embracing the whole humanity in a relationship that both gives and takes. This basic principle is made clear from the word 'Islam' itself, the prior and generic meaning of which, is 'self surrender (to God) in peace' and, therefore, as again *Al Qur'an* maintains, it is the religion of all prophets. In other words, from the angle of the archetypal meaning of all religions, despite their variations in symbolisms, there should be no seam between faiths as to make them as if they were fundamentally different, not to say opposed, from each

²⁰⁷ Schwarz, 1999, p. 175

²⁰⁸ Woodward, (n.d.), *President Gus Dur*. www.

²⁰⁹ Rush, 1993, www.

²¹⁰ Kyrway, 2000, 6 July. www.

²¹¹ Muzaffar, 1987, p.38

²¹² Barton, 1991, pp.77-78

²¹³ Madjid, 2001, www.

²¹⁴ Schwarz, 1999, p.180

other. The failure to appreciate symbols and, instead, giving too much emphasis on the formal aspect of religions, denies a person from the true faith, the heart of religions which is also the religion of the heart.²¹⁵

Ann Kull points out how Nurcholish draws inspiration from 14th century reformer Ibn Taymiyya as do fundamentalist Islamists, wondering if this is deliberate strategy on the his part or just coincidence. Nurcholish is one of Indonesia's most original thinkers, who promotes the principle of *Tauhid* with the authority of aligning Sufi thought with both Neo-Modernism and the *Qur'an*. His new intellectualism particularly values the Islamic notion of *ijtihad*, or relevant interpretation in the spirit of *Tauhid* within Indonesia's New Sufism.²¹⁶

Nu Ha Mim Keller clarifies the fact that Ibn Taymiyya considered himself a Sufi of the *Qadiriya tariqa* as volumes ten and eleven of his thirty-seven-volume *Majmu' al-fatawa* were devoted to *Tasawwuf*, this being considered an essential part of Islam by those particular 'ulama, also claiming this provable by number of famous *Shari'a* scholars who studied *Tasawwuf*.²¹⁷

But even if God is unreachable, His pleasure (*rida*) is approachable and attainable by following the straight path. It is thus extremely important to understand that a (true) religion is 'the way,' just as it is the basic idea around such terminologies as *shari'ah*, *sirat*, *sabil*, *tariqah*, *minhaj*, *mansak* in Islam, *tao* in Chinese religions and *dharma* in Indic religions, both Hinduism and Buddhism. It is also the principle behind the famous sacred saying of Jesus Christ in the Gospel that he is 'the way,' as he is the one to be followed in his exemplary activities in doing goodness to humanity in love and compassion, such as it is mentioned in the *Qur'an*.²¹⁸

Nurcholish sees *taqwa* (piety) as "a deep awareness of God's eternal presence in our lives advocating *dzikr* as the most important element in *taqwa*". Important to Nurcholish is the expression of *musyawarah* as an open-minded mercy recommended in Islamic doctrine As Nurcholish stipulates, "The most urgent task of Muslims today is to desacralise tradition, to put it back in its proper place, and thereby carry out the kernel of Islam which is *Tauhid*."²¹⁹

Indonesia. A model Unity?

If Malaysia and Indonesia continue their economic progress, they might provide an "Islamic model" for development to compete with the Western and Asian models.²²⁰

Within the Sufi mysticism of Indonesia the Islamic principle of *Tauhid* provides a humanitarian framework for the nation's ideal of Unity in Diversity. While our modern world is intensely pluralistic, the unifying trend towards world consciousness and the Islamic call towards Unity have much common ground, and while we quibble over differences that keep us apart, Indonesia is dynamically active in pursuing its future, and actively dynamic in asserting its independent right to be taken seriously, as well it should. It is not likely to wait forever on the sidelines of its destiny. The spirit of tolerance encompassed within the Indonesian principles of *Pancasila* is so firmly entrenched in the awareness of its people that even if Indonesia did move closer towards

²¹⁵ Madjid, 2002b, www.

²¹⁶ Kull, 2001, p.4, www.

²¹⁷ Keller, 2002, www.

²¹⁸ Madjid, 2001, www.

²¹⁹ Kull, 2001, p.7, p.11. www.

²²⁰ Huntington, 1996, p.121

the *Shari'a*, the tolerant ideals of *Pancasila* are solidly enshrined within its constitution and its very nationhood. Abdurrahman Wahid is convinced "that the silent majority in Indonesia is pluralistic in attitude."²²¹ Professor Bassam Tibi also confirms the value of *Pancasila*. We can also thank the Sufi advisors to Sukarno for this spirit of inclusiveness.

Pancasila is not a democracy of European pattern but it would be the best an Islamic state could ever achieve. And only because of this reason Indonesia is a country that could serve as a model for Islamic civilization. It would be eurocentric to put the European yardstick to the Indonesian mode. The question for the transition into the 21st century remains whether the - because of its pluralism - tolerant Southeast Asian Islam in line with continued economic success and stability of its political systems offers - despite the above-mentioned limitations - a model for the Islamic civilization.²²²

V.S. Naipaul relates Fazlur Rahman's vision of Indonesia as told to Imaduddin Abdulrahim, who helped to found *ICMI*. "I strongly believe that the Malay-speaking Muslims will lead the revival of Islam in the 21st century. There are three reasons. First, the Malay-speaking Muslims have become the majority of the Muslim world, and you are the only Muslim people to remain united. Second, you have a Muslim organization, *Muhammadiyah*, with the slogan, *Koran* and *Sumna*. Third, the position of women in Indonesia is just as at the time of the Prophet according to the true teaching of Islam."²²³

After considering the ideas of these Sufi inspired leaders it could be safely assumed that the political future of Indonesia might wisely be placed in such hands, upholding the true spirit of Islam with the responsibility to remember what Sufism has taught them.

If there is any hope for democracy in Indonesia, it lies with the Indonesian Muslims themselves. I believe that the Indonesian Muslims want to work towards true democracy and freedom in the country. They want to see social justice, equity and fairness in all areas of governance, economics, the legal system and so on.²²⁴

And while Nurcholish Madjid can openly admit that "We in Indonesia have never lived in a democracy," it sounds as if he is ready enough to take on the momentous challenge of creating one, owning "Now what happens in the future is up to us."²²⁵ For the present, we may safely leave aside this political sojourn with some words of wisdom from Indonesia's intellectual spokesman, a Sufi who has been called "the conscience of his nation,"²²⁶ now awaits to contest the 2004 presidency, always affirming the deeper reality to be found in *Tasawwuf*.

... the universalism of Islam, which is not only compatible with, but also works well within a democratic political system. Muslims need to remember that Islam is fundamentally universal in its outlook. This universalism lies at the heart of Islam as a religion and a system of values itself. Islam is not just ritual and politics - we must never forget the spiritual dimension, *tasawwuf*, that is so important in Islam.²²⁷

²²¹ Wahid, in Barton, 2002, p.190.

²²² Tibi, 1995, www.

²²³ Naipaul, 1998, p.23

²²⁴ Noor, 2002, p.38; interview. www.

²²⁵ Noor, 2002, p.38; interview. www.

²²⁶ Perlez, 2002, Mar.16, *New York Times*, p.4

²²⁷ Noor, 2002, p.38; interview. www.

5. Sufism and the Future. Confirming *Tauhid* for Spiritual Unity.

Sufi mysticism, in addressing the emergent spiritual faculty as a universal human attribute awaiting expression in an awakening of global consciousness, affirms the pure Islamic call for a common unity. Defining itself as Islamic and Monotheistic, Sufism also aspires to be accepted as spiritually ecumenical. Bruce Lawrence makes an important distinction.

The ecumenist believes that one becomes more universalist by surrendering particularist claims; the fundamentalist believes that one sustains universalism only by asserting and reasserting the divinely sanctioned particularity that separates not only Christian from Jew from Muslim, but [also] the Muslim elect from unbelievers with Muslim names.²²⁸

It has been conjectured that Sufism sees itself as an evolutionary part of the human spiritual consciousness. Lawrence sees Monotheism as “tangible witness to a living God also ... [one that] fosters the desire to impose universalist norms on society as a whole.”²²⁹ Monotheism, in the form of a humanitarian call to Unity, can also be perceived as part of the global human consciousness even in secular environments, summoning deep within the heart of the masses the search for ultimate meaning. Such a quest for a mature humanity harmonizes the mystical beauty found within the kernel of Sufism being expressed, even today, in the Islamic world of Indonesia.

Spiritual Unity for regional stability.

Indonesia's place in the world of Islam makes it the largest Muslim nation and still growing at a phenomenal rate. With around 35% of its population under the age of 15, it displays a demographic of youthful idealism likely to auger some uncertainty in the future dynamics of the immediate region. Certainly, with around 23 million Indonesians under the age of five,²³⁰ it is not too difficult to imagine some future wholesale shift in equity ideology. In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), Samuel Huntington claims that Muslim population growth will be a destabilizing force for both Muslim societies and their neighbours. Furthermore he notes, “The demographic explosion in Muslim societies and the availability of large numbers of often unemployed males between the ages of fifteen and thirty is a natural source of instability and violence both within Islam and against non-Moslems.” Huntington projects an imperialist scenario.

The large numbers of young people with secondary educations will continue to power the Islamic Resurgence and promote Muslim militancy, militarism and migration. As a result, the early years of the twenty-first century are likely to see an ongoing resurgence of non-Western power and culture and the clash of the peoples of non-Western civilizations with the West and with each other.²³¹

Indeed, as Adam Schwarz notes, “the late 1980s saw young Indonesians taking a part in the revival of Islamic consciousness.”²³² As Huntington states, the Muslim Youth Bulge (ages 15-24) for Indonesia is expected to peak in the 1990s.²³³ While at present we might see little

²²⁸ Lawrence, 1989, p.11.

²²⁹ Lawrence, 1989, p.110.

²³⁰ Schwarz, 1999, p. 410

²³¹ Huntington, 1996, p.265, p. 121

²³² Schwarz, 1999, p. 164

²³³ Huntington, 1996, pp.118-119.

sign of wholesale unrest visible in Indonesian society, it may be wise to investigate what is likely to drive Indonesia's Islamic Youth movements as they start playing for a greater stake in the world they will inherit.

There are two interesting facts to note in Indonesia as regards possible future movements. One is the number of people inhabiting the very densely populated island of Java, and the other is the hidden poverty lurking inside Java's largest cities. We may also note the exponential growth of the youth demographic. Lack of social justice may indeed be the likely background to both radicalism and violence. Deep poverty within Indonesia could surely feed the fanaticism of those choosing to create terrorism, for while development surges ahead of the everyday needs of many, societies are pulled apart as the hidden poor feel increasingly ignored and dispossessed. However, in fast developing societies, liberation of the dispossessed is hardly a priority. Here is where the Sufi movement with its emphasis on morality may be particularly important to urban societies undergoing the influence of rapid secular change. The Sufis can appeal to the modern elite and other aspirants to success, reminding them, even re-converting them and relocating them spiritually towards the heart of their traditional religion. Such a spiritual reconversion is already happening in Jakarta.

In the *Report on Islam and Human Rights*, Muhammad As Hikam recounts Abdurrahman Wahid's demonstration that "several basic principles in Islam, commensurate with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, can be found in the classical literature of the *Shari'a*." ²³⁴

The second principle, religious freedom, is commensurate with the universal declaration's idea of religious tolerance. At the heart of Islam is the idea of the Unity of God (*at-tawhid*). According to Egyptian philosopher Hasan Hanafi, the term '*tawhid*' can be interpreted as "the affirmation of human freedom without any oppression, human equality free from racism, and human justice exempt of social injustice." ²³⁵

Islam has always stressed the brotherhood of humanity and the mutual care for each member of the community, but this may easily get forgotten in the impersonal pressures of city living. So often just the struggle to eke out an existence in the highly competitive urban world leaves little time for communalizing. Those who drift away from the cooperative community of the mosque or the church are particularly vulnerable to loneliness and a sense of despair to become isolated or uncaring individualists. Our own society is rife with this tendency. Such is the spiritual poverty that may contribute towards not only anarchy and revolution, but ultimately even terrorism as a new form of social payback.

Immanuel Wallerstein brings into sharp focus the nature of the problem in relating it clearly to the world-system as a whole. For the vast majority of people in the world, be they Muslim or otherwise, there is a world system of inequitable domination which desperately needs to be changed, and the Islamists are not wrong to seek a change in the system. ²³⁶ Their desperation at

²³⁴ Hikam, 1997, www.

²³⁵ Wahid, cited in Hikam 1997, www.

²³⁶ Wallerstein, 1998, p.124

not being 'heard' is now forcing us to take some notice, if ever so slowly. The value systems of Islam are being reawakened, *en masse*. Humanity is seeking justice, *en masse*. While the prophets of God's message have long sought change in social attitudes and social response, the people, in their comfort, are resistant to changing their circumstances. It takes something as 'attracting' as pure Love or deep suffering to take away that resistance. The Sufis have a plan and a process to achieve just this. As Barton observed, Abdurrahman was inclined by nature to help persecuted and downtrodden minorities, noting that he is "against that which impinges on freedom of belief and freedom of conscience."²³⁷ Be that as it may, the true values of Islam have much to teach a world struggling for Peace, while their Sufi way is accommodative enough for even we Australians to open our hearts and minds to, if we only knew of its existence.

The religious spirit is a supremely relevant issue in Indonesia. According to Richard Bulliet, "the sheer abundance of people actively seeking answers to religious questions, in keeping with the ingrained pattern of Islamic history, affords a better augury of the future of the Islamic world than the specific teachings or political policies of particular religious leaders ... there is no reason to think that the current formulations being put forward will prove convincing or workable in the long run. Religious struggles within the Islamic world will almost certainly intensify in years to come."²³⁸ Furthermore, former Australian ambassador Richard Woolcott notes,

The real problem for Australia in the region is not our flag but the root social values. I suspect you won't find any Australians who are willing to surrender any of those values to be accepted in the region.²³⁹

Samuel Huntington quotes Lester Pearson, who warned in the 1950s of the need "to learn to live side by side in peaceful interchange, learning from each other, studying each other's history and ideals and art and culture, mutually enriching each others' lives. The alternative, in this overcrowded little world, is misunderstanding, tension, clash, and catastrophe."²⁴⁰ We are already seeing a resurgence of the age-old misunderstanding, tension and clash with Islam that has marked our past with some ongoing prejudice. Yet, in an armament proliferating world, to risk more misunderstanding is foolish in the extreme. In the current climate of uncertainty and cultural mistrust we must take Pearson's words to heart, following their intent with the kind of earnestness that the Sufis devote themselves to in their pursuit of wisdom. While we need to remember that in a true democracy, such as we believe Australia to be, popular attitudes, including those of the media, having some bearing on international relations, any bias can make disastrous inroads against the efforts of the most astute diplomats.

Certain elements within Islam, especially Sufism, provide a basis for a humanitarian, individualistic approach to life which is at once resilient and open to a range of cultural synergies . . . It can also contribute to a cosmopolitan but pluralist world culture. This contribution will not be without challenge and competition for other civilisational-groups, including East Asia and the West, but this implies neither the necessity of violence nor warfare.²⁴¹

²³⁷ Barton, 2002, p.174

²³⁸ Bulliet, 1994, pp. 206-7

²³⁹ Woolcott cited in Huntington, 1996, p.153.

²⁴⁰ Pearson cited in Huntington, 1996, p.321

²⁴¹ Ferguson, 1996, www.

Mediating reality

Just as the "Sufi saints mediate Grace (*Baraka*) to the people"²⁴² the modern world media is presumed to mediate truth to the people. Mediators have thus been endowed with a degree of credibility by the people. Over twenty years ago, however, Edward Said's *Covering Islam* (1981) exposed the history of mediated bias directed at Islam and yet, today, very little has changed. Since terrorism has alerted the world to the extremes of the Islamist agenda, every scholar and journalist has something to say about its impact on our security. Often enough they tend to get it wrong. It is not surprising that a general denial of the importance of the spiritual rationale of our regional neighbours persists in the general public, this being so often fed with sensationalist media reportage. In order to address these issues, our popular media representatives in particular could well challenge themselves to take a look at the Islam of Sufi Indonesia and learn something of its tolerant spirit of inclusiveness. While the Australian media highlights the militarism of Indonesia's internal tensions, tending to talk up barriers between Islam and the West, it promotes elements of alarm and fear rather than suggesting possibilities for tolerant cooperation and assimilation of shared values. Azyumardi Azra, rector of Indonesian State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN), points out that "it is 'simplistic' to think of Indonesian Islam as the same as Islam in the Middle East."²⁴³

Because of its slow, peaceful penetration over centuries, accommodating to and integrating with local beliefs and customs, and because of the less rigid structure of Indonesian traditional society (including the active role of women in public life), the conventional wisdom of Indonesian Islam as tolerant, inclusive and inherently compatible with democracy is valid.²⁴³

Lawrence urges a revision of perceptions on the Islamic world, noting "Most journalists, and many policy makers, continue to discount any but what is conjured up as Arab Islam in projecting the orthodox face of puritanism and militancy." In today's world of globalizing accountability, media representations of Indonesian Islam still "tend to emphasize difference and divergence from unitary ideals, rather than showing respect for an accepted worldview,"²⁴⁴ an outlook contributing towards an upsurge of racial intolerance in Australia. Sydney academic Kevin Dunn, studying the racial attitudes of 5,000 residents of N.S.W. and Queensland interviewed after Sept. 11, found that 83% acknowledged a problem of racism in Australia while 12% openly admitted to being racist. These results suggest "dramatic scope for inter-communal relations tensions in Australian society."²⁴⁵ The political wedge that has been driven between our two countries over the issue of East Timor still holds a backlash that threatens to engulf us with even greater tides of ignorance, spurred on by perceived associations with the American world media's sensationalizing of the Middle East crises. It is not unlikely that Australia's current fear of Islam also contributes towards an Indonesian wariness towards Australia.

²⁴² Bellah, 1970, p.36

²⁴³ Azra, 2002, Feb.7, *USINDO/TAF Conference: Islam in Modern Indonesia*, p.2, www.usindo.org.

²⁴⁴ Lawrence, 1998, p.4.

²⁴⁵ Islam Online News, 2003, www.islamonline.org.

For a more realistic interpretation of the Indonesian situation we should note Greg Fealy's observation that "despite widespread media coverage particularly in the West about rising fundamentalism, the evidence from the 1999 election [in Indonesia] is that about three quarters of Muslims voted for pluralist parties ... The great majority of Indonesian Muslims, people who according to their citizenship cards profess Islamic faith, voted for parties that were not formalist in their Islamic beliefs or had Islamic agendas."²⁴⁶

Accommodative policy, to some degree, may be associated to [the] pluralist approach in seeing the relationship between Islam and state ... Besides, it is the most realistic way given that Indonesia is such a huge, tremendous heterogeneous country that should accommodate its various interests and problems ... I think we need not to be afraid of being syncretistic in that good governance presupposes the idea of accommodation towards political interests all over Indonesia; thus no political preference and priority. In my tentative assumption, seeing Indonesia from pluralist point of view is a must. Meanwhile Islam is seen in relation to state as an independent cultural force that supplies values/norms/ethics.²⁴⁷

R. James Ferguson considers Sufism provides "a useful dialogue partner for modern liberal thought by providing a constellation of values with a strong intellectual and moral tradition." Like many others, Ferguson sees "Sufism, as an indigenous, eclectic and tolerant form of Islam likely to aid this stability." Indeed, as he notes "such a form of Islam is badly needed by the entire international community."²⁴⁸

So what have the Sufis to say on how we could more adequately mediate reality? While their call for a tolerant and pluralist society would surely support a rethinking of media strategy, their focus would ultimately take them beyond the everyday perception of the 'outward' to a direct perception of that inward sacred space in each and everyone of us where we see with the 'eye of the heart' that vision of reality which accords with the Reality of *Tauhid*. The prevalence of negative stereotyping of Islamic custom by the media generates public belief against Islam as a religion of Peace. This is far from the Truth. While the Western media hesitates to acknowledge the reality of any spiritual basis to society, the new generation of Indonesian intellectuals will seemingly be well placed to communicate and shed light on the enduring values of the inner workings of Islam. Perhaps this re-emergent new Sufism could enlighten the rest of the world, and as far numbers are concerned Indonesia is already well to the fore. A critical mass of Sufis may yet prove, in years to come, an amazing experience for the region.

It is worth pondering why Sufism currently attracts such worldwide attention in so many differing cultures worldwide. Could this quest form part of a natural inner progression towards globalized unity, and be underwriting this movement? Or does it merely feed into a New Age, Neocolonialist push to culturally subvert the rest of the developing world. By watering down Sufi ideas for commercial consumption, there is a likelihood of them becoming attenuated from the integrity of the essential message. This might seem a viable reaction to the Sufi thrust against European colonialism, and a rationale for a subversive attempt to denigrate the Islamic

²⁴⁶ Fealy, 2002, Feb.7, *USINDO/TAF Conference: Islam in Modern Indonesia*. p.36. www.usindo.org.

²⁴⁷ Hilmy, 1999, www.usindo.org.

²⁴⁸ Ferguson, 1996, www.usindo.org.

resurgence that is sweeping the world. While we may note just how many new authors all clamour to sell their latest spiritual books to their newest 'spiritual' converts, this would provide another rationale for passionate reactions from radical idealists to defend their perceived religious purity from a polluting economic rationalism heedless of any but its own self-interest. Nonetheless, it is the highly paid executives and elite members of Jakarta society who are being targeted as recipients of the new urban Sufism, in courses of instruction priced to suit. While it might be prudent to question *who* is funding *what*, a sense of Sufi balance will probably prevail over time. Nevertheless the Sufi response to truth can be noted in those who promote these courses, in their aiming to influence future leaders of the society.

[W]e should remind ourselves that in an increasingly independent and interpenetrating global community, any human rights and civil orientation that does not genuinely support the widest possible shaping and sharing of all values among all human beings is likely to provoke widespread skepticism.²⁴⁹

While an innate acceptance of *Tasawwuf* and *Tarekat* by many Indonesians would imply an Islam solidly based upon peaceful ideals, one doubtless capable of bridging many cultural boundaries, at times there have certainly been alternate Sufi responses to various historical contingencies which have provoked a dynamic rebellion in the face of situations denying forms of social justice. Thus while Sufism can be seen as a balance to more extreme forms of radical Islam, it is in the humanitarian side of its ethical response to equity issues where we may, once again, find a few surprises. For in all fairness, we who partake unequally of the world's wealth are living on a borrowed credit that is not likely to last forever.

In attempting to form a socially responsible humanity, an Islamic resurgence can become explainable in alarming the supremely affluent West. For while Communism has faded from the political arena in most of the world, the issue of deep poverty it was created to contest is just as real today and is still not being addressed adequately. Islam sees itself, in its purest form, as the custodian of communal issues that desperately call for humanitarian justice. If global Western powers do not concede to this basic human right, they will just as surely be fought against for those same rights. It is simply a matter of time and the awareness of human inequity. The Sufi agenda is thus particularly crucial to our future security and moral awareness. The real dynamic underwriting Sufism would therefore uphold the most ethical values of *Tauhid*. If we can understand this instead of fearing it, our futures may eventually sustain a real connection with those Indonesians sharing the quest for a comprehensive spiritual renewal.

We could also examine what the Indonesian Sufi agenda might contribute to *our* international relations. A reemergence of the Sufi values of tolerance and Unity in the region would surely moderate outcomes for any reformist ideals emergent within Islamic frameworks inside Indonesia, whereas the more accommodating world view of a Sufi influence there would ultimately benefit Australian-Indonesian cross-cultural relations. With a crucial need for a

²⁴⁹ Madjid, 2002a, p.111. www.

spiritual milieu intelligently based on peaceful diplomacy, the mounting interest in Sufism offers the possibility of a global spiritual movement heralding a new bridge from the pure spirit of Islam over the rising waters of secular disenchantment with Western economic rationalism in its denial of some core moral values. It could thus open the door to international community at the level of shared values and responsibilities. To deny the importance of this level of relationship is to risk remaining always the 'outsider' in the region, enough of which has happened already.

The recent difficulties in Australia and Indonesia bilateral relations are good lessons for both political elites now and the future. Promoting universal values, such as human rights, democracy and transparency in its neighbouring region is valid for a country like Australia. However, the region should not sacrifice local values, interests and identities, nor ignore its historical experience. Sadly, the growing convergence in people's taste, the consumption of ideas and technology in the so called 'borderless world' has not brought a better understanding among people from different cultural backgrounds.²⁵⁰

Neither should we ignore the religious traditions of our neighbours that have encouraged them to follow a policy of peaceful negotiation. However, perhaps some day our stress on remaining at odds with the rest of Asia might become a cultural embarrassment. Any idea of retreating to a neocolonial past will hardly keep working forever. It may, at the very least, be wise to inform ourselves more fully about our Indonesian neighbours while learning to appreciate what spiritual values they have to impart. This might be achieved by a more integrated interchange of spiritual knowledge at all levels of education.

We might indeed query what future Indonesia's interest in the new international Sufism will bring to bear on Indonesia's relations with Australia in helping to negotiate the lurking fear of Islam we so commonly exhibit. Considering the high degree of spiritual passion within Indonesian society, we might possibly include some deeper consideration of Sufism in relation to the Australian national interest. Inasmuch as Sufism has not only survived but thrived in Indonesia, we might profitably read how this has happened, and if there is indeed something of great value we are missing. At best, we Australians tend to be laughably ignorant about Islam. We must honestly confront the question of our intolerance and sincerely ask ourselves if we have, as a nation, lost touch with whatever we perceive God to be. If our secular society fails to connect and reach out with a heart that can empathize and share with our neighbours the values they treasure the most, we certainly appear to be lacking something vital, something that may, if we refuse to rediscover it, put us at a distinct disadvantage at some crucial time in the future. Could Sufism help in this respect? The answer is surely Yes. As Abdurrahman Wahid observes,

If the motive behind our work is God (theocentrism), then it means that the aim is goodness for the people we are part of. On the other side, if the motive is ourselves (anthropocentrism), it means that all activities are disconnected to God and merely related to human being instead. Differentiating theocentrism from anthropocentrism brings us to an understanding of the two sides in modern life that are always fighting. I believe that theocentrism is the pillar for us in social life. This is probably because of my long education in Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*). Therefore, God stipulates the interest of people as society, not as individual.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Kalidjernih, 2000, www.

²⁵¹ Wahid, 2002, www.

The yearning for spiritual relevance.

The long search for a global consensus on spiritual unity surely stems from the yearning for spiritual relevance felt by growing numbers of human souls living in a world, much of which has outgrown the religious practices of timeworn traditions. In a world of converging human consciousness it is vital to consider where our own Australian spirituality may be heading and how we really fit in to the overall spiritual consciousness of humanity? William Chittick presents an important perspective on the importance of a religious outlook to integrity of the individual.

What the Islamic intellectual tradition never lost sight of was that the human soul needs knowledge just as the human body needs food, and the only nourishing knowledge is that which throws light on the knower that knows it. The leading scholars always understood that the goal of learning was to reach self-realization, which is for the self to know itself and its God without any intermediaries and, through that knowledge, truly to be. In order to achieve such knowledge, one needs to treat knowledge as the precious awareness of self that it is. You must dedicate yourself to knowing this: Who am I? What substance am I? Why have I come? Where am I going? From whence is my root? At this moment what am I doing? Toward what have I turned my face? ²⁵²

Australia is an empty land, its people compulsively clinging to its shorelines while complacently waiting for a distinctive spirituality to emerge from within its mysterious heart. This is not to say that we do not have our own distinctive spirituality. Our spirituality is different and, in many ways, unformed. While it is not linked to any one religion or person it tends to relate more to the values we place on our own sporty 'outdoor' lifestyle. It is, nonetheless, a spirituality distinctly isolated from the rest of the region and one that is hardly comprehensible as such. In fact, it is little recognized by our own people as a spirituality at all, so out of touch are we from the meaning we place on our inner relationship with our universe. While our culture has been slowly changing and developing we have not kept up with formulating a response to our own deepest nature. In the absence of a common recognition for its indigenous heritage, Australia might profitably look towards its present negation of Islam and journey north towards a deeper involvement with the enterprising spirit of Indonesia that is modern Sufism. Within Australia, our public education suffers from a deficit of complimentary religious education, particularly with any focus on Islam as the ascendant belief system in our region.

In Australia the mystical dimension has long evaporated from most religious education. The simplified stories which abound in Bible Christianity are usually devoid of any deeper development of their spiritual significance, while many people have grown into adulthood with their childhood faith never becoming adjusted to changing intellectual and experiential perceptions. Little wonder that much of the secular, and so-called Christian West is riddled by doubt, uncertainty or naive defensiveness. If we cannot or will not respond to this pressing dilemma, our churches continue to empty as our traditions inevitably become more irrelevant to the greater majority. The creation of new secular or nationalist traditions scarcely fills the void, for these tend to confirm our isolation and detract from any attempts towards a universal sense of

²⁵² Chittick, 2002, www.

solidarity. Such sharp differences leave us particularly open to further bias against others who we perceive as different. It is at this level that our education lets us down, for it lags far behind the direction, almost unawares, in which our own Spirituality is taking us.

The inward or spiritual approach to religion is deeper, based on personal experience, tolerant towards difference, compassionate towards those who make different life-choices, and relatively free of ideological fanaticism.²⁵³

One Australian academic teaching courses on Spirituality, David Tacey, considers Australia's changing attitude towards religion as a depletion in the formalized belief patterns of young Australians emerging from a weakening Christian upbringing, yet yearning for personal and spiritual meaning. He refers to "the gap between youth and formal religion in our society." Tacey remarks that "Spirit in a sacred context is too religious for the secular academy to deal with, yet it is in this context that many students are talking about spirit today."²⁴¹

The concept of education comes from the Latin *educare*, meaning 'to lead out', in the sense of drawing out what is within ... If spirit is present in students, our institutions are not fulfilling the promise that is inherent in the word 'education' itself.²⁵⁴

If Australian education fails to tackle this problem sooner rather than later, our prospects for a tolerant pluralist society seem hardly promising. Surprisingly Tacey makes no mention of the vibrant spirituality of Indonesia nor the universal spiritual values they may have to share with us.

Ibn al-'Arabi wrote: "God is known only by means of God." The scholastic theologian says: "I know God by that which he created" and takes as his guide something that has no real relations to the object sought. He who knows God by means of phenomena, knows as much as these phenomena give him and no more' (Ibn al 'Arabi's commentary on his own *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*).²⁵⁵

Overall we commonly find adults who have been religiously under-educated, trapped in the continuing mire of a five-year-old's view of a Biblical Semitic world with little relevance to our modern worldview. At best, a religious education which is either half-hearted or incomplete can leave the personal human soul at odds with either the self or with the world. On one level this may lead to a desire to escape life as soon as possible, hence the notion of suicide. At most, many adults simply remain attuned to fundamentals they have learned as young children, having never been taught how to develop their belief systems coherently in relation to the growth of their consciousness. At worst, we find fundamentalist zeal based upon misguided ethics tied to a religious framework of belief that mistakenly supports violence for some equally misguided belief against society. One result of an incomplete religious education leads many people to dispense altogether with any kind of religious thinking. It may be wise to note that this makes it easier for them to be politically manipulated in any social bind that superficially gives them a feeling of community or group cohesion. In the wrong hands, like that of *One Nation*, this leaves far too many people open to manipulation from populist political propaganda. We need to determine at what steps religious education, or lack of it, can lead people astray - perhaps at the various crucial steps where the educator's task could be to actually assess and then correct beliefs

²⁵³ Tacey, 2002, pp.75-77.

²⁵⁴ Tacey, 2002, pp. 58-59.

based upon inappropriate anthropocentric views of reality - particularly before adolescence and towards the end of formal school education. To be asked, 'How do you personally understand your religious beliefs' may seem overly intrusive an approach, yet a religious belief can easily move beyond the personal, into the social or the political domain where danger can explode without an ethic having been correctly learnt and reinforced. Tragically modern education in many Western systems has become devoid of a specific ethical training in spiritual values. The curriculum thus lacks a true education for the soul of its people. Spirituality, however, is not a niche area. It belongs to the whole democracy. The degree of religious prejudice that has emerged in certain sections of the Australian community since Sept.11 has already caused untold suffering to many Muslim women in particular. One strategy to combat this anti-racism suggested that "Education about different religions, including Islam, should be compulsory in public schools at an early age, not just as an optional elective in secondary school."²⁵⁵

Indonesia has endeavoured, more than adequately, to address the religious dimension of its youth agenda, which is just as well considering how many there are. The religious curriculum is highly flavoured with moral principles and a scientific, if Islamic, approach to learning. If there are some pockets of fundamentalist fervour, this situation is at odds with the unitary focus of the government sponsored religious system. In this area we are lagging far behind Indonesia. Here is where Sufism might help to provide some strong links between religion and psychology that could lead us towards answers to this dilemma. Sufism and other forms of mystical religion have a place - to supply that wisdom and spiritual knowing that has been excised from much of social religion - and to equate it with humanitarian ethics in the most universal sense.

Although Indonesia's mystically inclined religious systems are perceived to be alien to Australia's materialist world view, many Australians who visit Indonesia feel deeply enchanted by the richness of that spiritual culture. With a greater use of English inside Indonesia and a greater focus on teaching Indonesian language and culture in our education system, there could be valuable cross cultural flows for young Australians seeking to penetrate some of the spiritual wealth of Indonesia, and the Sufi way of *Tasawwuf* would be the most accommodative introduction to the purity of Islam. As an introduction to Islam, Sufism surely holds an easier fascination for our students than the more difficult concepts of orthodox Islam. Sufism as a philosophy of personal, social and spiritual unity, works on the personality and the soul of its disciples to reform them spiritually to the point where they *can* become highly integrated participants of a common humanity with esoteric links to the divine reality which is their real desire and focus. The human progression towards unity and the search for spiritual relevance already have their esoteric Sufi workers embedded within many avenues of worldly pursuit quietly or passionately working at harmonizing the conscience of a God-growing humanity. As the *Naqshbandiya* Sufis say, the Sufi should be "*In the world but not of the world*".

²⁵⁵ Trimmingham, 1971, p.137

²⁵⁶ ISMA – *Listen*. 2003, June. www.

Educating spirituality. The Sufi agenda.

The search for Unity within Indonesian Sufism has been an ongoing phenomenon. Even today it is tackling the mission of educating the people in the way of the Spirit. The Sufis have developed and tested quite a remarkable system for educating the human spirit, refining its qualities and perceptions and purifying its values without unduly sacrificing much of its original integrity and creativity. Besides this, it also becomes possible to witness nontraditional Sufism coping with the rapid spread of a Western style of secularism, indicating a comfortable realignment of traditional Sufi accommodation with the renewal of syncretism that has proved so culturally vibrant in the past. Here, more than in the orthodox environment of formal Islam, is where new trends are emerging to engage the virtues of Islamic purity.

The new 'Neo-Sufism' (*Tasawuf Positif* or 'Practical Sufism') responds specifically to the new conditions of Indonesian urbanism. Notwithstanding the ideological imperatives of nation building for an unambiguous, prescribed religious identity, people are propelled into privatized styles of religiosity by their experiences of social and geographical mobility, exposure to global economic forces and cultures, and participation in international cultural activities.²⁵⁷

New cross cultural flows are being spread by a renewed aesthetic attraction towards the great classical expressions of Sufi thought, like a growing interest in the ideas of Ibn al-'Arabi in Jakarta, which are reconnecting new generations of Indonesians with their Sufi core. In urban Indonesia the *tarekat* are promoting a newer mystical Sufism informed with sophisticated intellectual ideas. The International *Ibn Arabi Society* in London has attracted interested enquiries from Jakarta, with cultural interchanges of seminars and conferences following.²⁵⁸ In 2000 the Beshara School of Intensive Esoteric Education of Scotland organized a nine day course in Jakarta on Ibn al-'Arabi's, *Oneness of Being*. Another course was held in 2001 on the *Universality of Truth and the Singularity of Mankind*. These courses challenge all students, traditional believers or not, to leave aside their conditioned knowledge and understanding for the duration of the course.²⁵⁹ More Sufi texts are being translated into Indonesian, and Sufi sites are exploding onto the Internet awaiting their harvest. With no shortage of Sufi interest and information, never has it been easier to start upon the mysterious Sufi journey (*suluk*) towards God and never before have there been so many intrepid dervishes awakening to the call of their common unity. The growing influence of Sufism, internationally, might yet provide some new enlightenment for mankind, and Indonesia, whose people already hold both *Tasawwuf* and *Tauhid* closely to their hearts, may likely surge to the forefront of this spiritual renaissance.

In contrasting the spiritual attitudes prevalent in Indonesia with those of Australia, while endeavoring to discern differences and possible points of contact, it seems obvious that Australians unwisely ignore Indonesia, let alone denying their abundantly rich and intuitive spiritually that appears so lacking in Australia. It is surprising that while a general denial of the

²⁵⁷ Howell, 2000, www.

²⁵⁸ Ibn Arabi Society, (n.d.) *Ibn Arabi in Indonesia*. www.

²⁵⁹ Beshara School of Esoteric Education, 2002, www.

importance of our regional neighbours spiritual interest persists within Australia, the *pesantren* system in Java has often succeeded "in creating a hybrid system of education combining religious instruction, scientific and technical training reflecting a different Islamic model of interacting with modernity than that which is encountered in many other places in the Islamic world."²⁶⁰ Is it not a little odd that they are embracing our way of life and aligning it with their deep spirituality while we are still ignoring their relevance to us? While young Islamic intellectuals in Jakarta are renewing their awareness with the classical Sufi philosophy of Ibn al-'Arabi, Australia's youth are still searching for an understanding of the emptiness in their spiritual quest for meaning.

Our Australian education could benefit from a more complimentary coverage of religious culture with a particular focus on Islam in our region and Sufism, as an introduction to Islam, may hold more fascination for our students than the more formal concepts of orthodox Islam. Often religious values seem to be waning in Australia while they are waxing strongly, if at times puritanically, in Indonesia. Surely, in exploring these issues in a wider educational context, we may prepare some new ground for developing a feasible spirituality to educate more students to be more tolerant and understanding about the religious interests of their near Asian neighbours. By comparison, the United States with its numerous University courses on Sufism and Islam, appears to be far more informed about the religious development inside Indonesia than we often are in Australia. The intrinsic power of mysticism is so little known inside Australia while in Indonesia it is inherently conscious in much of the population. The contrasts herein are too great and still leave too much room for cultural misunderstanding. Put into more secular terms, what Sufism may teach us is how to loosen up and lose our petty selves in the value of a higher Good, to responsibly take our part in the true democracy of a greater Universal awareness than one which values only the part over the good of the whole, to merge into a sound Unity of Being and Know in our hearts, experientially, we are One.

The realization of *tauhid*, the state of *iithād* ('union') in the language of metaphor and *tawhid* ('making one') "in the language of reality" [Ghazzali *Mishkat al-anwar*]. 'Making one' means giving the unique reality of God its full due, recalling here the verse (6:91) with which al-Qushairi introduces his chapter on *Ma'rifa*: 'They have not reckoned God at his true worth.'²⁶¹

Going the Sufi way: Spiritualizing our future.

A Sufi reawakening in Indonesia could play some significant part in redressing the balance between legalist orthodoxy and popular spiritual devotion, hopefully accommodating a greater measure of tolerance within the general Muslim community towards the secularizing trends which have largely swept over the modernizing world. While some Muslim reformists may balk at seeing the *Tariqa* and the *Shari'a* as complimentary to each other, there can be no doubt that

²⁶⁰ Lukens-Bull, 2000, www.

²⁶¹ Shah-Kazemi, 2002, p.175

the *Qur'an* advocates compassion and forgiveness of human weakness within an inclusive universality. The underlying question, however, remains one of a universal acceptance of individual responsibility towards human unity. At the same time Richard Bulliet notes that "We are currently living through one of the greatest periods of intellectual and religious activity in Islamic - and human - history."²⁶² This growing complexity in the global human family as social organism incurs with it a need to become acutely consciousness of our unity as a species. It is in this direction that Sufism can help to answer this call.

The growing importance of Islam insistently demands a greater degree of understanding of this faith on the part of the West ... Indonesia, whose economic growth rates are among the highest in the world. There is indeed a particular Islamic approach to development, one that strives to reconcile moral and religious values and economic advancement ... Only when spiritual matters are attended to first will God reward one with material advancement. The Islamic approach to development begins with different assumptions but still embraces capitalism. In some cases, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, very high economic growth rates are achieved. The Muslim begins by establishing that spiritual advancement is the first priority ('God does not change the condition of a people until they change their own inner selves,' *Qur'an*, sura 13.11). The Muslim therefore begins with the concept of the oneness of God (*tawhid*) and of the community of believers (*umma*), the members of which have a responsibility for one another.²⁶³

Indonesia still remains a complete enigma to most Australians, while there are clearly many overt Australian fears towards Islam. While there may be some concern that the Sufi agenda might amount to a vanguard of missionary Islamic zeal, it must also be acknowledged that what Sufism has to offer could be profitably subsumed into even the distinctive new Australian spirituality that is presently starting to emerge. Indeed, just because our spirituality is so new and still in its formative stage, we could well use some of that same quality of accommodation and tolerance that the Sufis themselves are so adept at maintaining. Whatever the case, we need surely not be afraid of losing our own emerging identity from a nation that is home to at least 370 ethnic groups, speaking 67 different languages and following various religions and beliefs, when leaders like Nurcholish Madjid can insist that Pluralism must be promoted, observing that "In the long run upholding a truth will benefit all people for a long time, perhaps eternally."²⁶⁴

According to Roger Bell, "In many respects, Australian society remains largely distinct from the diverse nations of the region, despite efforts to engage more broadly with them."²⁶⁵ My contention is that this attitude is simply funded by cultural ignorance; a condition we would be unwise to sustain. In choosing to open our hearts and understanding to Indonesian Sufism, one of the more gentle and accommodating understandings of Islam, we shall be more readily positioned to reap the benefits of an alliance with a great future force in the Islamic world. For there is more than some likelihood, as more commentators these days are observing, that

Jakarta, not Jeddah, is where the future of Islam will be decided.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Bulliet, 1994, p. 207.

²⁶³ Cantori, 1997 p. 38.

²⁶⁴ Setiogi, 2003, June 4, www.

²⁶⁵ Bell, 1997, p. 215

²⁶⁶ Peters, 2002, p. 18. www.

Even now, despite the deepened gulf between our relative outlooks and provided we can educate our public opinion to a higher degree of tolerance, there should exist enough shared spiritual value containing common bonds of human warmth to negotiate a deeper alliance between each respective search for an acceptance of Unity.

The responsibility or obligation, known as *taklif* laid down on man exclusively, knows no bounds. The task of Islam is thus global, and the nature of the task is moral and religious, not political or economic. It was based precisely on this theory and action that the early Muslims began to establish a new order that differed from that of the Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Romans and even the Indians.²⁶⁷

In this journey along the mystic Sufi Way of Indonesia we have envisioned the Islamic principle of *Tauhid* providing that framework for a Unity in Diversity, not only within the archipelago of many thousand islands to our north, but indeed encompassing a global human plurality in which we are all taking part. Nevertheless, there remains a strong Australian denial of Asia, of which we are geographically a part, one which sits on our northern doorstep calmly, placidly and mystically awaiting its time to move. Should that movement ever become Islamically assertive, we may then all wish that we had taken some time out, in our past, to become at least acquainted with the gentle yet dynamic, thought provoking side of Islam known as *Tasawwuf*. If this excursion into Indonesian *Tasawwuf* is to signal any response, it will be necessary to loosen our individualized ideas against Islam based on bias and prejudice, or indeed, against whoever 'the other' may be, and merge into the universal reality of a Unity, or *Tauhid*, that is greater and by far more real than the isolated totality of oneself. This is precisely what *Tasawwuf* was designed to teach, and it is a lesson far too valuable and necessary to be left to chance. If, as is said, 'the Journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step,' we must at least start teaching our children, and indeed all our people, that there is such a journey to be taken, and that it is, indeed, much closer than we think.

Proofs which have been stated
as indicating the True Unity,
-in the *Kur'an* and the *Sunna*
many are to be found;
further the Masters of Sufism
all give indications
pointing to Unity.
Divine Providence declares :
'East and West belong to God
and which ever direction you face
you will see equally
there the Essence of God.'

from the Javanese version of *al Tuhfa*, by al-Burhanpuri.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Mowlana, 1996, p.128

²⁶⁸ al Burhanpuri, *Tuhfa* trans. Jchns, 1965, pp.87-89

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Glossary

Clarification of terms

Please note the difference between the use of the terms **Islam** and **Islamic**, pertaining to the religion of Islam and **Islamism** and **Islamist**, pertaining to political radicalism with extremist Muslim views.

Indonesian and Arabic spelling may be used interchangeably, e.g. *zikir*, *zikh*, *dzikir* and *dhikr*, *dzikr* *berkah* and *baraka*
syehk and *sheikh*

Sufi terms

<i>Dhikr</i> , <i>zhikr</i> , <i>zikh</i>	remembrance of God, fundamental practice of <i>Tasawwuf</i>
<i>insan-i-kamil</i>	the completed human being, 'Perfect Man'
<i>salik</i> , <i>suluk</i>	Truth seeker, 'Traveller' or 'Wayfarer'
<i>shaikh</i>	spiritual guide
<i>Tariqa</i> , <i>tarekat</i>	the path of Sufism; Islamic mystical order
<i>Tasawwuf</i>	Sufism, the science of Islamic mysticism
<i>Wahdat al-Wujud</i>	Unity of Being
<i>Kadiriyya</i> , <i>Qadirriyya</i> , <i>Khalwatiyya</i> <i>Naqshbandiyya</i> <i>Sammaniyya</i> <i>Syadiliyya</i> <i>Syatariyya</i>	Sufi orders
<i>Qadiriyya wa Nakshabandiya</i>	Original Indonesian order
<i>Wahidiyya</i> <i>Ahmadiyya</i> <i>Idrissiyya</i> <i>Tijaniyya</i>	Reformist Sufi orders

Indonesian terms

<i>abangan</i> (Jav.)	from <i>abang</i> (red) Muslim rural communities with pre-Islamic influences.
<i>adat</i>	customary law.
<i>Babad</i>	History
<i>kebatinen</i>	Javanese mysticism, Islamic or indigenous <i>abangan</i> mysticism
<i>ICMI</i>	Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals set up in 1990
<i>Ibu kyai</i>	female <i>kyai</i> , leading a <i>pesantren</i>
<i>kyai</i> , <i>kiai</i> (Jav.)	Muslim leader of a <i>pesantren</i>
<i>Mahabaratha</i>	Hindu epic common in Javanese <i>Wayang</i> theatre
<i>Muhammadiyah</i>	Islamic modernist reform organization (1912)
<i>Nadhlatul Ulama</i>	Islamic traditionalist organization (1926)
<i>Neo-Modernism</i>	Reformist movement to make Islam relevant to modern life.
<i>Neo-Sufism</i>	Modern Sufi organizations more loosely based than traditional orders
<i>Pancasila</i>	The five principles of Indonesia, the first being belief in one God
<i>Paneran</i> (Jav)	Lord, or ruler
<i>Pesantren</i>	Javanese rural Islamic religious schools - literally 'the place of the <i>santri</i> .'
<i>pondok pesantren</i>	Islamic boarding school with traditional curriculum based on the Quran.
<i>pencak silat</i>	traditional martial arts
<i>santri</i>	exclusive Muslim, concentrating on devotional activities in a <i>pesantren</i>
<i>Sejarah</i>	chronicle
<i>syehk</i>	spiritual guide
<i>Sunan</i> (Jav.)	from <i>suhun</i> (to implore), title for respected civil and religious leader.
<i>tarekat</i>	Sufi Way to mystical knowledge, Islamic mystical order or brotherhood
<i>tauhid</i> , <i>tokid</i> (Jav.)	<i>Tawhid</i> or Divine unity
<i>wali</i>	saint or 'friend of God'
<i>Walisongo</i>	nine Sufi saints who brought Islam to Java
<i>Wayang</i>	shadow puppet theatre
<i>Zikr</i> , <i>dzikr</i> , <i>dzikir</i>	<i>dhikr</i> , repetition of invocation in remembrance of <i>Allah</i>

Glossary (cont.)

Islamic terms

<i>adab</i>	Muslim etiquette
<i>Allah</i>	God
<i>awamm</i>	common Muslim
<i>batin</i>	inner, esoteric, mysticism
<i>baraka</i>	blessing or spiritual power surrounding a holy place through a Master.
<i>fatwa</i>	decision on Islamic law.
<i>Five Pillars of Islam :</i>	<p><i>Shahada</i> : confession of faith in one God</p> <p><i>salat</i> : ritual prayer 5 times a day</p> <p><i>saum</i>: fasting during daylight during <i>Ramadan</i>, the holy month</p> <p><i>zakat</i>: tax for some charitable cause</p> <p><i>hajj</i>: pilgrimage to Mecca at least once a lifetime (if affordable).</p>
<i>fikr</i>	contemplation, reflective power of thought
<i>fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence according to <i>Shari'a</i>
<i>hadith</i>	'report, account' , a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>hajj</i>	pilgrimage to Mecca.
<i>Haqq</i>	Truth
<i>Hijra, 'hegira'</i>	emigration of Muhammad and Muslims from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE
<i>ijtihad</i>	creative interpretation of <i>Shari'a</i> , striving for knowledge of the Sacred Law
<i>ikhlas</i>	sincerity
<i>ikhtiyar</i>	free choice
<i>iman</i>	faith
<i>Islam</i>	self surrender (to God) in peace
<i>jihād</i>	struggle in the work of God.
<i>kalimah</i>	formal content of the <i>shahada</i> witness, the words of Faith
<i>khawass</i>	spiritual elite
<i>kufr</i>	infidelity
<i>Ma'rifat</i>	Gnosis, Divine Knowledge,
<i>Muhaqiq</i>	one who practices the Truth
<i>Mujtahid</i>	one who affirms Unity or <i>Tawhid</i>
<i>nafs</i>	lower self/desires
<i>nur</i>	Spiritual light
<i>Qadl</i>	Judge
<i>Qur'an</i>	the Holy book of Islam revealed to the Prophet Muhammad
<i>Sunni</i>	Islamic tradition of the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia, Indonesia, Pakistan,
<i>shirk</i>	idolatry, association of something with God, opposite of <i>tawhid</i>
<i>tafalli</i>	Self-disclosure of God's revelation, manifestation
<i>taqiya</i>	caution
<i>tahqiq</i>	verification or realization
<i>tawhid</i>	the divine Islamic principle of Unity, central doctrine of Monotheism
<i>Ulama</i>	Islamic scholars
<i>Umma</i>	Muslim community of believers, worldwide.
<i>Wali pl. awli'ya</i>	'friend of God', Muslim 'Saint' or holy person
<i>Wifq</i>	healing amulet containing holy verses
<i>zahir</i>	outer, manifest

Appendix I. Map of Modern Indonesia



Courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

Population:

234,893,453 (July 2003 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 29.7% (male 35,437,274; female 34,232,824)

15-64 years: 65.4% (male 76,743,613; female 76,845,245)

65 years and over: 4.9% (male 5,086,465; female 6,548,032) (2003 est.)

Religions:

Muslim 88%, Protestant 5%, Roman Catholic 3%, Hindu 2%, Buddhist 1%, other 1% (1998)

Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 88.5%

male: 92.9%

female: 84.1% (2003 est.)

Inflation rate(consumer prices):

11.9% (2002 est.)

Population below poverty line:

27% (1999)

Area:

total: 1,919,440 sq. km

water: 93,000 sq. km

land: 1,826,440 sq. km

Geography:

archipelago of more than 17,000 islands (6,000 inhabited); straddles Equator;

strategic location astride or along major sea lanes from Indian Ocean to Pacific Ocean

Indonesia (Small Map) U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2003. Indonesia. UTLOL - Perry-Castañeda Library. Map Collection ©2003 General Libraries The University of Texas at Austin.

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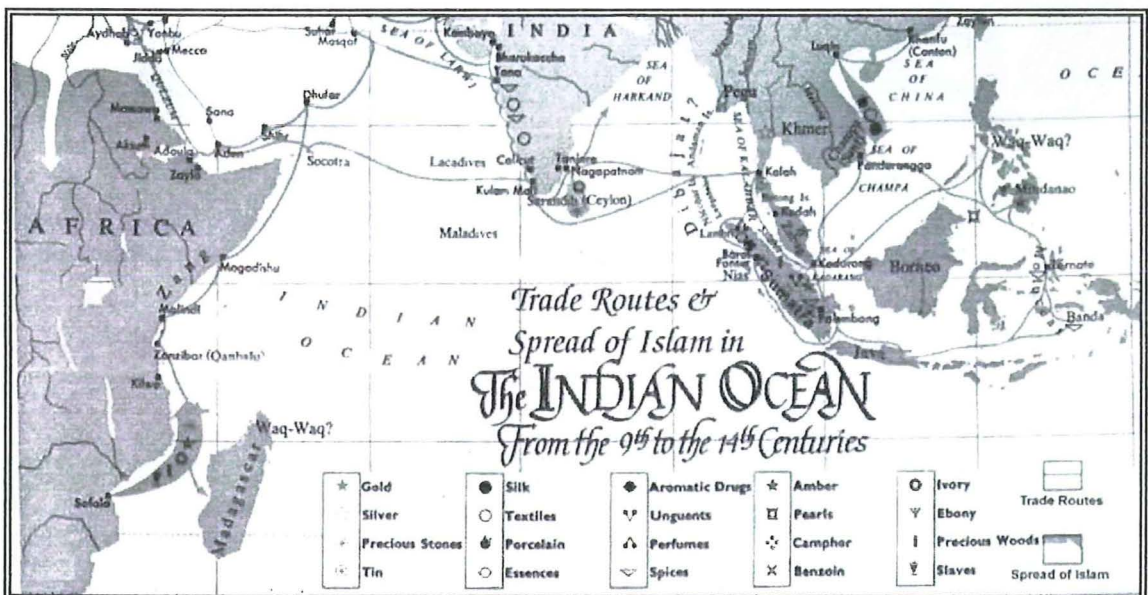
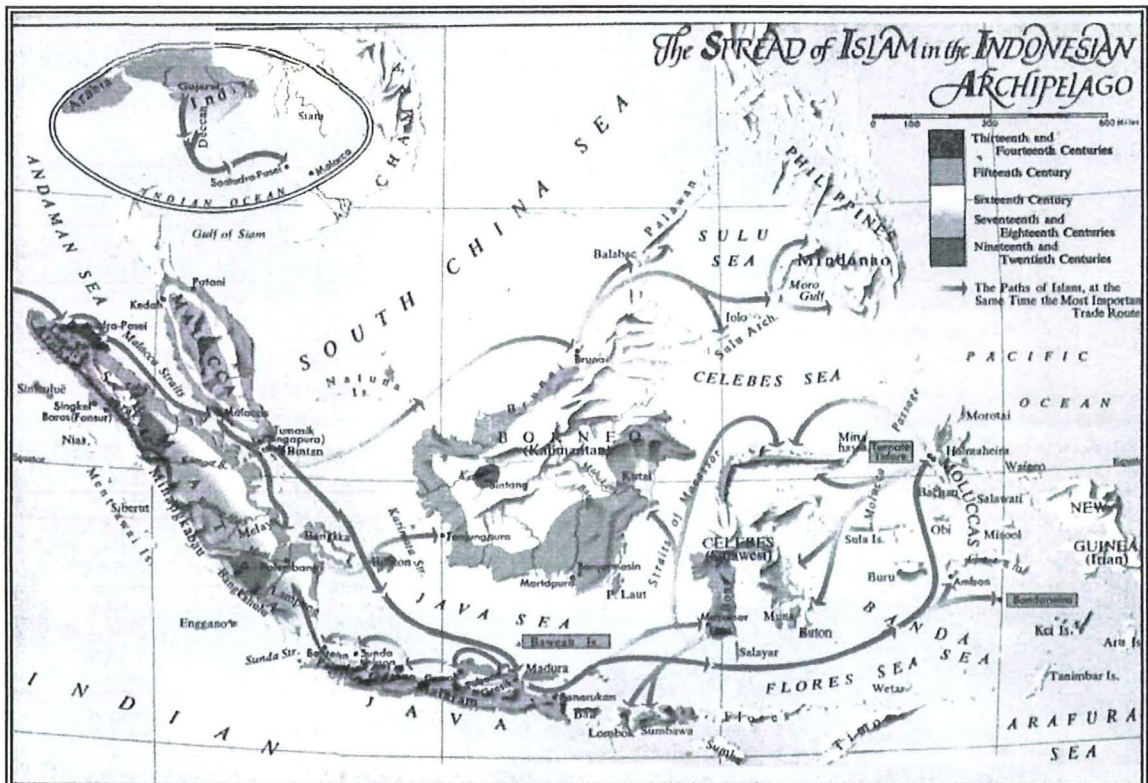
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Appendix II. Historical Maps

The spread of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago (*Nusantara*) following the paths of the most important trade routes.

from the 13th and 14th centuries,
15th century,
16th century,
17th and 18th centuries, and
the 19th and 20th centuries,



Appendix II. Historical Maps

Indonesian Archipelago (*Nusantara*) in the 15th century



Java in the 15th century



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